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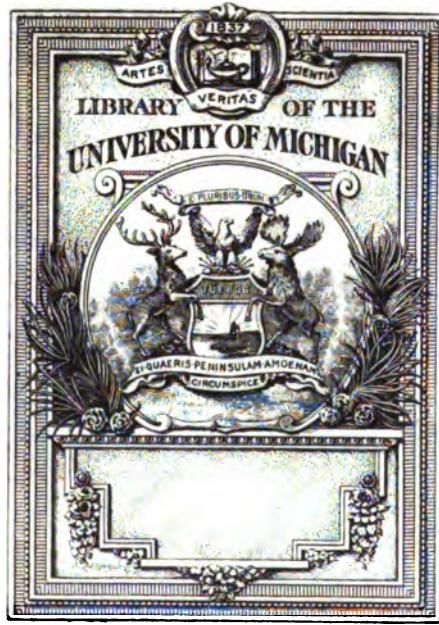
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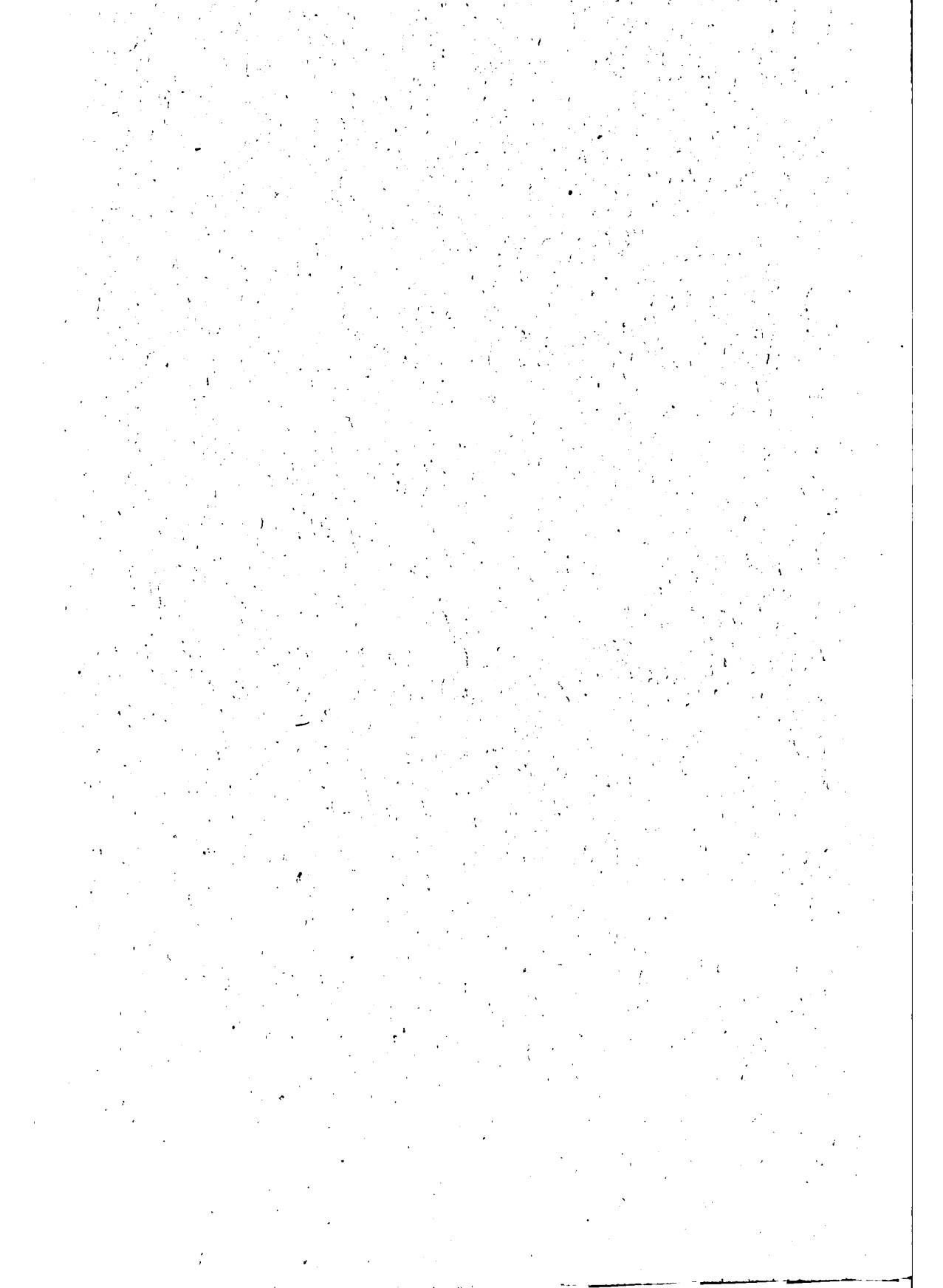
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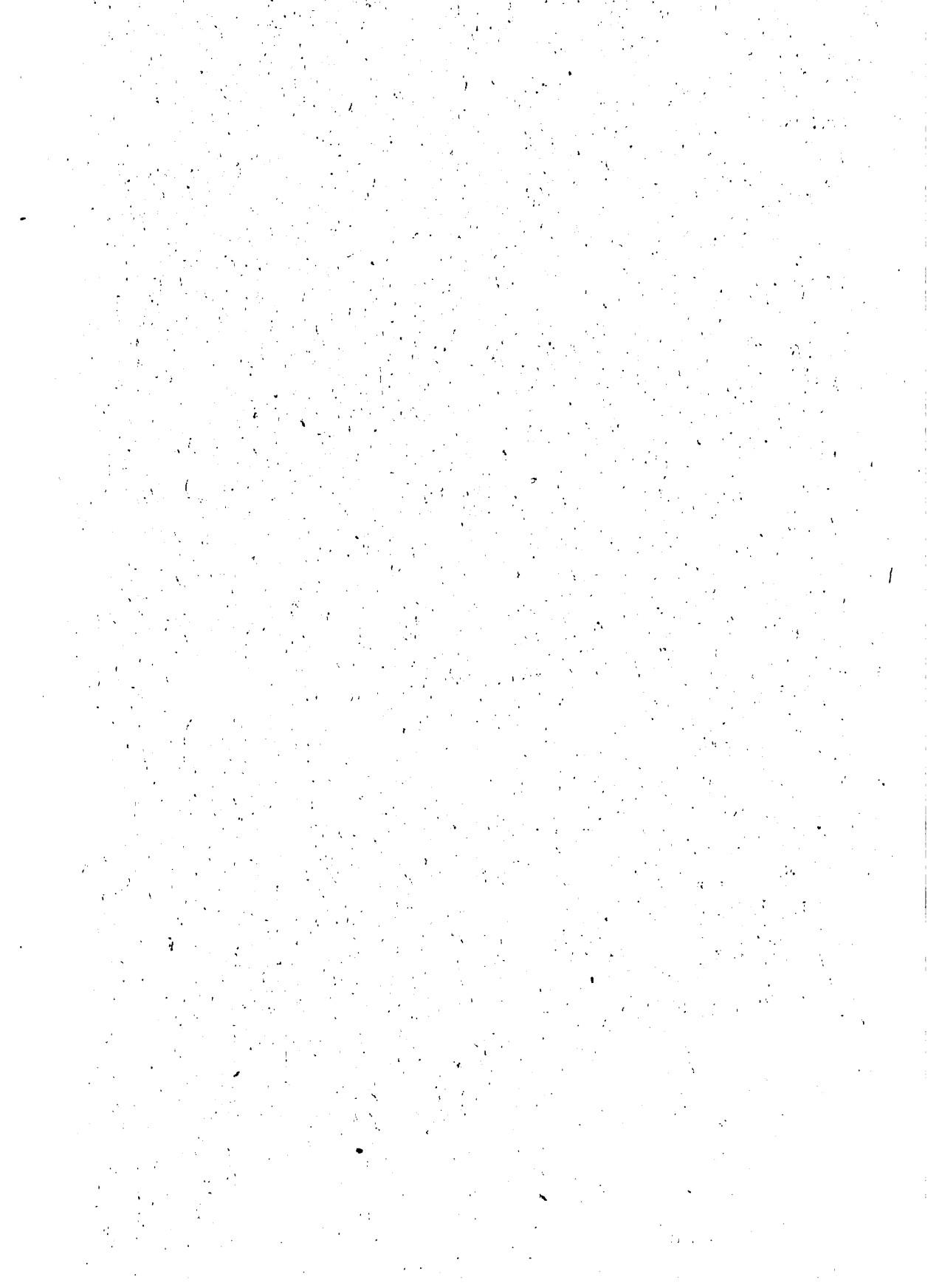
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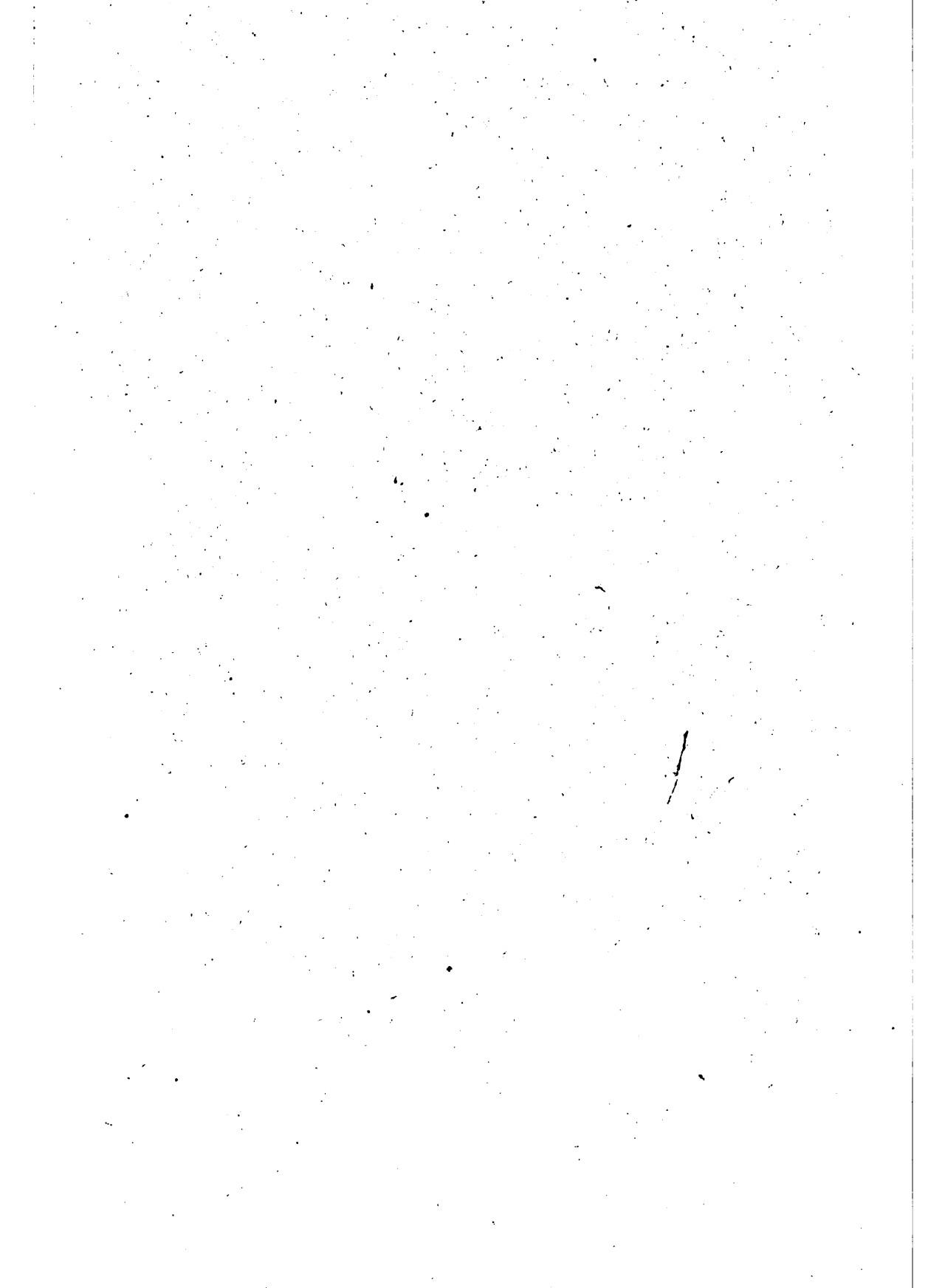
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PROCEEDINGS AT A RECEPTION

IN HONOR OF THE

REV. O. B. FROTHINGHAM

GIVEN BY THE

New York INDEPENDENT LIBERAL CHURCH.

AT THE UNION LEAGUE THEATRE

TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 22, 1879

TOGETHER WITH THE REPORT OF THE FAREWELL SERMON

DELIVERED BY HIM AT MASONIC TEMPLE

APRIL 27, 1879

NEW YORK

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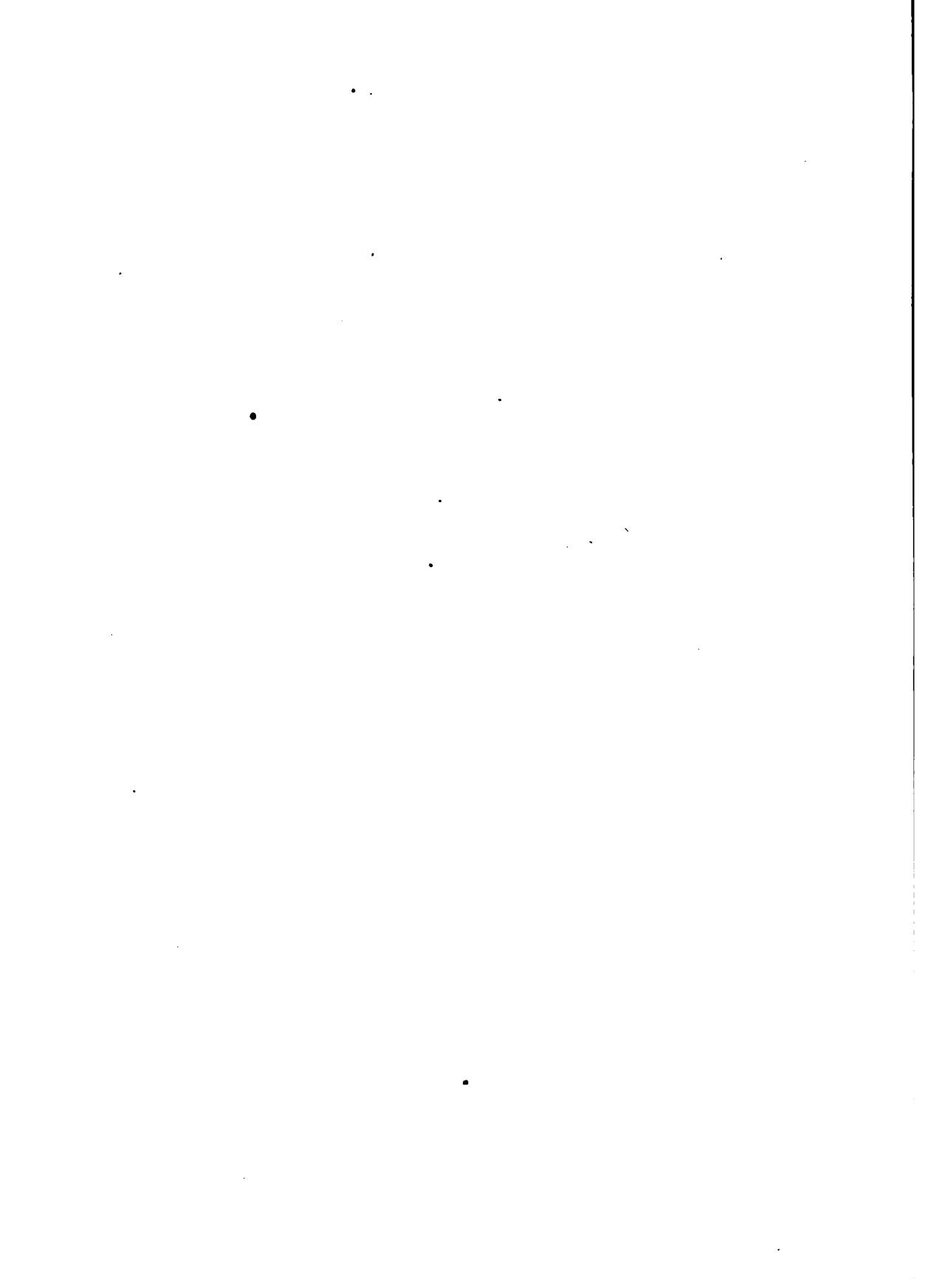
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RECEPTION TO

OCTAVIUS BROOKS FROTHINGHAM



THE Reception given at the Union League Theatre, April 22d, 1879, in honor of the Rev. O. B. FROTHINGHAM, was of such peculiar interest to those who hold the Liberal Faith dear that it has been thought well to preserve some record of it in printed form.

Mr. FROTHINGHAM had, early in the year, announced his desire to seek rest, by travel abroad, from the severe intellectual strain of an unbroken service of twenty years, and had tendered his resignation of the pastorate of the Independent Liberal Church, to take effect from the 1st of May. The Trustees of the church, being unwilling to lose him altogether, had persuaded him to withdraw his resignation and to take a vacation of a year or more. Knowing the earnest desire of the members of his congregation to meet him once more socially, and, in giving him a farewell greeting, to express in some measure their appreciation of his work for them and for the community, they resolved to invite the members of the Society, together with a few friends of Mr. FROTHINGHAM and of the cause, to meet him for that purpose, and appointed from their own number as a committee to make the necessary arrangements, J. H. Morse, Geo. Haven Putnam, and Frank Fuller.

It soon became apparent to the committee that Mr.

FROTHINGHAM'S hearers had keen ears and listened to his preaching from far-away corners of the land. The desire to shake hands with him and bid him God-speed brought applications for invitations from all quarters, and in numbers far beyond the capacity of the hall selected for the meeting, and the task of the committee in making the final selection was by no means an easy one.

On the evening of April 22d, the reception-room and parlors of the theatre were filled to overflowing with an audience bright, interested, and enthusiastic. One recognized on every side the faces of men and women whose influence in literature, art, and science, in affairs private and public, in charitable work and beneficent reform, is matter of public history.

To have won such an audience,—so kindly, so intelligent, so warmly appreciative, so full of good works,—must surely have made even Mr. FROTHINGHAM sensible that his labors in the direction of practical piety had not been in vain.

On the platform, besides the guest of the evening and the Trustees of the church, were Mr. George W. Curtis, Col. T. W. Higginson, Prof. Felix Adler, Mr. Edmund C. Stedman, Rev. Samuel Longfellow, Prof. Ogden N. Rood, Rev. Joseph May, Mr. Richard H. Stoddard, Mr. Oliver Johnson, Rev. William I. Potter, of New Bedford, Rev. J. W. Chadwick, of Brooklyn, Prof. Vincenzo Botta, and Rev. W. T. Clarke, of the *Evening Express*.

In the audience (if we may play the reporter and call a few names,—and Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S Society are not unused to the "chiel amang 'em takin' notes") were, among others:—Mr. and Mrs. Calvert Vaux, Mr. Jervis McEntee, Mr. and Mrs. S. R. Gifford, Mr. and Mrs. R. Swain

Gifford, Mrs. M. P. Jacobi, Mr. C. D. Gambrill, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Cook, Mr. C. P. Cranch and daughter, Mr. Edw. F. Underhill, Eliot C. Cowdin, Hon. Hugh McCulloch and family, Prof. and Mrs. Charlton T. Lewis, Mr. Noah Brooks, Mrs. Charles L. Brace, Mrs. C. R. Lowell, Mrs. F. P. Barlow, Mr. Chas. H. Webb, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Runkle, Miss Augusta Larned, Mrs. Abby Sage Richardson, Hon. D. B. Eaton and wife, Dr. T. M. Coan and sister, Hon. A. J. Dittenhoffer, Mr. and Mrs. Junius Henri Browne, Mr. M. J. Heade, Mr. Samuel Wilkinson, Dr. H. Knapp, Mr. A. J. Johnson and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Christern, Mr. and Mrs. Hermann, Mr. Sinclair Tousey, Mrs. James G. Birney, Mr. Charles Collins, Dr. and Mrs. J. H. Emerson, Mrs. Stoddard, Mrs. Stedman, Mrs. Higginson, Mrs. Geo. Haven Putnam, Mrs. Morse, Mrs. Fuller, the Misses Dixwell, Mrs. Ogden N. Rood, Miss Hillard, Mrs. E. S. Mills, Mrs. Gilchrist and daughter, of London, Mr. Chas. H. Farnham, Mrs. J. Dillon, Mrs. Edw. Curtis, Mrs. Villard, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wilkinson, Mrs. D. G. Croly, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Cheever, Mrs. Albert G. Browne, Mr. Merritt Trimble, Mrs. John Hopper, Mr. Samuel Shethar and daughter, Mrs. Wallace, Mrs. Groot, Col. J. H. Meredith, Mr. J. M. Mestrè, Col. and Mrs. Stone, Mr. W. T. Richards, Dr. and Mrs. J. P. Mann, Mr. C. E. Adams, Dr. and Mrs. Longstreet, Mr. J. Lockwood, Dr. Louis Warner, Mrs. Tolles, Hon. H. D. Townsend, Mrs. Charles Watrous, Mr. H. T. Lockwood, Mrs. Laura Curtis Bullard, and Mrs. O. W. Bird.

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Shortly after 8 o'clock, the chairman of the evening, Ex-Gov. FRANK FULLER, called the meeting to order, and said :

I am deputed by my associates of the committee to tender a cordial welcome to our friend and pastor who is to-night our honored guest, to those distinguished gentlemen who have come from far and near to testify their regard for the man and his work, and to the members of the society and their friends, who have gathered together to do him honor.

If it were permitted me to inspire the sentiment of this occasion, I would say: Let every face be wreathed in smiles ; let every heart be glad ; let joy be unconfined. This is no sad and tearful leave-taking between pastor and people. It is merely the closing scene of a brilliant act, covering a fifth of a century. All these years the actor has been before us, in books, in varied writings, in pulpit and in platform utterances. In all these years he has never spared himself. He has taken upon himself tasks which few men of stronger physique could endure. His brief summer vacations have usually brought only a change of work. Constant writing has taken the place of constant speaking, and he has returned to his city labors with no real consciousness of added bodily or mental vigor. He needs rest ; rest absolute and entire ; that perfect rest which comes to us only when we feel that we can drift away whithersoever we will, utterly free from care and under no pledge to return and resume the harness. We rejoice that our good friend is permitted to enter upon this period of idleness and rest, with every sense undimmed, every faculty in complete training, and with that perfect capacity for enjoyment which makes sight-seeing enjoyable, travel de-

lightful, and rest regenerating. No tinge of gloom must cloud this sunny picture; no minor note of sadness must mingle with the music of the hour.

Perhaps it is almost trivial to allude to the mere methods by which Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S great work has been achieved. And yet we must recognize these as a part of the man, a condition of his success; and I question much, if any of us who have been strengthened by his ministrations, will ever forget the perfection of his oratorical system. Year after year I have sat in his presence, and have waited for that supreme moment when, the beautiful preliminary service ended, he has deliberately severed his connection with the reading-desk and has bravely placed ten feet of space between himself and any base of supplies,—any source of relief, whatever the exigency. A hundred times I have whispered to the good lady beside me, (I hope my friend has forgiven me for whispering in church,) “he burns his ships behind him;”—though I always had a lingering doubt of the appropriateness of the simile, for I do not believe a mind so richly freighted, with such a wonderful spread of intellectual canvas, has needed any ships to float its marvellous wealth of argument, of illustration, of fact, of imagery. You who are public speakers know what it is to stand thus alone before a vast audience, alert, watchful, seeing you, and you only. You who are ministers know well the tremendous value of a “scrap of paper.” You have seen the time when a half sheet of note-paper, crammed with hieroglyphics unintelligible to any eye save yours, would not have been exchanged by you for a similar fragment made legal tender for the best sum which the Treasury Department has authority to print; because upon that scroll depended the symmetry, the roundness, the per-

fection, the effectiveness of your discourse. The notes of your speech are the notes which call for specie payment from the golden coinage of your brain, and these are worth far more to you than the notes of any bank, however redeemable. You who are lawyers know well the value of your brief. You to whom the public platform has become as familiar as your native heath, can yet appreciate the value of a desk hard by, scattered with fragments of paper seemingly of little worth, yet capable of kindling your imagination into fervent heat. Mr. Edward Everett told me—and I do not think I violate his confidence in repeating it—that every line of his great oration on the character of Washington, was written out and carefully memorized; that weeks, and I think he said months, were expended in repeating it aloud in the privacy of his study, and that in spite of all his care, his first half dozen public utterances of that eloquent production were but imperfect rehearsals, gradually becoming more perfect until his own critical sense was satisfied. Mr. Rufus Choate, one of the most wonderful orators that our land has ever produced, assured me that he never ventured upon a prolonged effort without committing his thoughts to paper. I have had occasion to know something of the methods of a very large number of our best public speakers during the last twenty-five years, and I can remember but one who, without putting pen to paper, could venture to cut himself adrift, even once, for a single hour, and to stand alone, with only his theme, before an expectant multitude. This our friend has done, not once merely, but habitually; with never a lapse, never a failure, never a solecism, never an error of taste or judgment; always affluent in language, copious in illustration, convincing in logic, in argument impregnable. His dis-

courses have been, as all admit, models of compactness, of symmetry and of strength; while his personal manner has been recognized as the embodiment of grace itself.

Of his services in the cause of humanity, of his great influence over the morals, the literature, the politics, and pre-eminently over the religion of the period, I may not speak, since other and more eloquent tongues will seek to render unto him fitting tribute in this regard. But we cannot forget how he never ceased to strike sturdy blows for freedom, until the glad sun no longer rose upon a master, nor set upon a slave; we know how earnest he has ever been in the advocacy of temperance and the highest morality; we have seen his love and sympathy for the weak, the ignorant, the lowly—the little children of the race; we can testify to his unwavering advocacy of the just claims of woman; we know indeed how strong, active, earnest, helpful he has ever been in all good works.

Who can say how many lives have been made sweeter and purer and brighter for his ministrations? I know I voice the sentiment of some, and I believe I rightly interpret the general feeling of his people, when I say that no words spoken by human lips have ever conveyed to the sad heart higher consolation than those which he has uttered. I know that in those calamities which are the common lot of all but the utterly friendless—which are sufficient to make utterly friendless even the most favored,—poor, burdened human hearts have found a sufficient friend and comforter in him. I know how his love of nature has pervaded the hearts of those about him, painting the lily with new tints and adorning the rose with added beauty. I know how books have developed for us new charms through his interpretation; how art has been glorified and music

made more tuneful, and how every good and glorious achievement of men and women in all ages has become sacred and hallowed to our hearts through his teachings. I know how through him we have come to reverence the teachers, the prophets, the saviours of mankind.

How broad has been his charity, how bounteous his liberality! how grand, lasting and infectious has been his enthusiasm—that quality which is the very life of gifted souls! How ready and generous and vivifying has been his sympathy with us in our work, our failures, our successes, our joys, our hopes, our aspirations! How have his words comforted us in our afflictions, and sustained us in our griefs!

I think the experience of one of us may be taken as a type of the experience of all. Discouragements, trials, disappointments, losses have come to us, and we have been tired and sick of all together. Common words have become tasteless things and all effort hateful. The oar has slackened, the strong arm has fallen listless, and we have tired of contending with the mad race of waters and have longed to put out of the current into some quiet cove, where sunbeams glitter in golden rings and over-hanging trees make sweet music and soft whisperings; or perchance the darkness of danger or sorrow has blotted out the light of earthly hopes, or has hidden the path which had been trodden so confidently; or, as has been the sad experience of so many of us, the dark shadow of death has fallen before and around us, turning the bright heavens into lead, the green earth into dust, and despondency and gloom have settled down like a dark cloud upon our hearts, and the glowing page of literature has been stricken of its charms, and the dream-land of sound has had tones in it that are

heart-wringing, and painting has lost its color, and nature her bloom and beauty, and her serene, ineffable composure has pained us like the indifference of some fondly-loved friend, or her myriad voices have been discord in our ears, "like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh,"—then has this sweet magician pointed us to the pathway of duty, the hallowed avenue of noble deeds and kindly acts, leading up to the temple of perfect peace, and with words of consolation, of encouragement, of hope, has shown us the silver lining to every cloud, and has taught us with renewed strength to rise as on eagle's wings.

A word to the members of the society who suffer the poignant pang of parting. This much-needed rest which our good friend seeks—how nobly has he earned it, how gladly we accord it. Let us with cheerful hearts say to him, "Go and find renovation amid new scenes and new peoples! Fill up the undying springs of life and thought from new sources of inspiration and replenishment! Come back to those who love you, if you can, and as soon as you can, assured of open arms and open hearts to welcome you; and, in any event, may every blessing and all good gifts be lavished upon you and yours."

The Chairman. I will call upon one of my associates—a gentleman who has been brought up in the society; who knows its history, and can state many interesting facts concerning the work of Mr. FROTHINGHAM. I have the pleasure of introducing Mr. George Haven Putnam.

Mr. PUTNAM. Notwithstanding my friend Fuller's reference to my knowledge of ancient ecclesiastical history, I am myself but one of the younger members of the society, and can lay no claim to speak for it. I certainly am glad,

however, of the opportunity of expressing my own sense of the value and importance of the work of Mr. FROTHINGHAM during the past twenty years, not only to us his parishioners, but to the community at large and to the intellectual life of the time. The cessation of this work will be felt as a personal loss by a great number of admirers and sympathizers, in addition to the large circle of personal friends who have grown up about him during his ministry.

The history of the society is not a long one. In 1859, Mr. FROTHINGHAM, who was at that time carrying on some kind of a liberal mission in the wilds of Jersey City, was invited to New York at the instance more especially of John Hopper, J. S. Taylor and Geo. Lyman. A congregation was speedily gathered about him, which, in 1860, was incorporated under the name of the "Third Unitarian Society of the City of New York." For three years they held their services in halls,—first in 32d and later in 33d Street. On Christmas Day, 1863, was dedicated the only church building we ever possessed,—the edifice in 40th Street—now occupied by the congregation of the Rev. Dr. Ewer, (for whom some further dedication was probably found necessary.) The building was not considered a success architecturally, and failed to meet the requirements of the society, and in 1869 it was sold, and the society took possession of Lyric Hall. In 1875 they removed to Masonic Temple, which they still occupy. In 1874 the name of the society was changed from the Third Unitarian to the "Independent Liberal Church." This step, as I understand, was not taken on account of any change in our own theological position (if we may be said to have a theological position), but rather in deference to the feelings of some of our more orthodox Unitarian friends, who were sometimes troubled

at being held responsible for the utterances from our pulpit.

During the nineteen years of its corporate existence, the society has increased steadily in numbers and influence, and if its growth in numbers may not have fully kept pace with the extending reputation of its pastor, the explanation is, I think, not far to seek.

His teachings addressed themselves naturally to the younger and more enterprising minds in the community, the men whose convictions were in process of being formed. Among these were fewer of the wealthier citizens whose positions in life were assured, and whose residence in the city was permanent. The fluctuating element in the congregation was therefore always exceptionally large; and many of our earlier members were called away by their work to California, Colorado, Utah, New Jersey and other distant lands. If this scattering of its material was a decided loss to the society, we may console ourselves with the idea that it was in many ways a gain to the liberal cause, in that it helped to establish new centres of liberal influence and to leaven public opinion throughout the land.

We claim further, however, that work such as that of our pastor is not to be measured or estimated by the size of congregations or the sumptuousness of church edifices. He belongs to a small but noteworthy group of men who, while not always speaking the language that reaches directly to the multitude, have confided to them the still more important task of teaching the teachers, of helping to shape the thought of the thinkers, and in whose hands, or rather on whose heads rests the responsibility for the direction of a large part of the intellectual life of the time; a group of which we have with us here to-night some distinguished

representatives, and of which the acknowledged type and leader in this country is Ralph Waldo Emerson. There is not a cultivated writer of our race and generation who can escape the influence of the ideas of Emerson, and these will be found woven into the fabric of many writings differing widely from each other in character and purpose. And in like manner there is not an earnest, scholarly preacher in the land, whose sermons are not modified, more or less consciously by the teachings of Parker and Frothingham. These cannot be evaded, will not be fought down. They can be heard to-day from hundreds of orthodox pulpits. They are loosening and dissolving the bonds of the grim Puritan creeds in which the keen New England intellects have been held as in a vice. They are putting into the shadowy realm of historic myths the dogmas of the Thirty-nine Articles, the Westminster Catechism, and the Saybrook Platform. They underlie our literature, they shape our conduct.

Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S position has been in many ways a peculiar one. His work as he has shaped it, has isolated him in a great measure from the other leaders and teachers in the community; so that in this great city, during the larger part of his pastorate, he has been able to count upon the coöperation of hardly a single fellow laborer. Our society practically has formed a denomination all by itself, of which our pastor was at once Bishop, Priest, and governing Synod. Partly as a cause, and partly as an effect of this isolation, Mr. FROTHINGHAM, especially in the earlier years of his work, was very much misunderstood by the community in which he worked. He has been dreaded, derided, prayed against (and doubtless also prayed for) by thousands of good orthodox people, whose only impres-

sions of him were derived from absurdly grotesque misrepresentations of his sermons. Because his convictions compelled him to assail with incisive and destructive criticism dogmas and theological systems which he believed to be outgrown, untrue for the generation, and therefore pernicious, he has been charged with endeavoring to subvert the foundations of society and morality. Inferences such as these remind one of the logic of the old pro-slavery advocates, who used to imagine they had triumphantly answered your appeal for justice to the slave by the pertinent question, "would you wish your daughter to marry a negro?" What was the case with the pastor was true, though of course to a much less extent, with his society. We have been considered to be a wild, dangerous lot, full of vague and incendiary ideas. I think it was not many years ago that in a trial between some good orthodox fellow citizens, in which a member of our society happened to be called as a witness, the attempt was made to discredit his testimony on the ground that no person could be worthy of trust who sat under such preaching as ours.

It is very certain, however, that the last ten years have witnessed a decided change in the relations of our pastor and our society to the community and to public opinion, and, as I am not aware that we have done anything especial to amend the error of our ways, I can only assume that there has been an advance in public opinion. Mr. FROTHINGHAM is now recognized as a living force in the community, and is accepted, even by decided theological opponents, as an earnest, able teacher, working for the best good of his fellow-men as he understands it. And as for his society, I think it is also beginning to be understood that men who for the sake of convictions, forego the many conveniences and ad-

vantages of denominational associations, are at least as likely to be trustworthy citizens as any who may still remain safely ensconced in orthodox folds.

If I have understood rightly Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S teachings, he has maintained that, important as it was for a man's beliefs to be sound, and in accordance with his higher reason, the essential thing for purposes of manliness and character is that they should be to him real and vital, and not the mere husks of dead creeds. He holds that convictions, to be worth anything, must be worked out by each man for himself, and not be simply accepted with the local prejudices of the village in which he was born, or as an heirloom with the run-down works of his grandfather's clock. A man who has honestly possessed himself of the dogmas of half a dozen mediæval creeds, may, at least if he escape aggressive fanaticism, have in him the making of a good citizen. The man who honestly doubts the accepted beliefs of his time, and who, through his skepticism, incurs the unpopularity that always falls upon him who opposes the faith of the majority—that man is nearly always a good citizen. But he who holds on to the empty form of a faith which he has outgrown and which is no longer real to him, or he who, still worse, puts on the name of a creed that has never meant anything to him, has never been a part of himself—that man has in him the making of a bad citizen. It is he who recruits the ranks of the respectable defaulters and swindlers and demoralizers of society.

With all the eloquence and power that is in him, Mr. FROTHINGHAM has fought the falsity and demoralizing influence of untrue and outgrown creeds; and I say it is a great thing for the moral tone and the intellectual integrity of a community when it has in its midst at least one

man who, possessing the full courage of his convictions, and fearing the authority of no bishops, presbyteries, priests or deacons—no, not even of his trustees—will stand up week after week and set forth with all the power that is in him the simple truth as he knows it. As an example of moral manliness, of unflinching courage, and of unselfish devotion to the great cause of spiritual and intellectual liberty, as well as of one of the intellectual leaders of his day, all honor is due and will be given to the name of O. B. FROTHINGHAM.

The Chairman. I have no courage, and no disposition, ladies and gentlemen, to seek for words with which to do honor to the distinguished gentleman upon whom I shall now call—the matchless orator, the profound thinker, whom it is now my privilege to introduce—Mr. GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

MR. CURTIS then spoke as follows:

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. Despite what it has pleased our Chairman to say, there is always something a little sad in saying "good bye," except indeed to bores and bad habits, and especially to say it to a man whose going leaves among so many friends nothing but regret, which will not disappear until he comes home again.

I confess, and I am sure that you will share with me the feeling, that I have a very profound sympathy for our friend Frothingham this evening. It is not that he is going to Europe, but it is that this is one of those occasions when a man is obliged to sit still and hear precisely what his friends think of him ; and unless I am exceedingly mistaken, before we gentlemen on this platform have done with him, he will have heard so much truth about himself that if he had not

proved in innumerable ways his indomitable courage, he would certainly take his hat and slip out of the door. The truth is that our friend is one of those Americans who are so good that it is permitted to them to go to Paris before they die; and if he had any occasion—which I think we know very well he has not—to test the regard in which he is held in this community, he could have chosen no other way so craftily as this of taking his passage next week to sail away amid the pathetic music of a thousand heartfelt farewells.

I remember a good many years ago when I was about sailing for Europe, a friend of mine said to me very ruefully, for he could not go, "Now, if you will promise to write me a letter from the dome of St. Peter's in Rome, I will do the best I can, and I will answer you from the City Hall steps in New York." I feel very confident that if we were to write to our traveller upon his journey, he would not be very apt to reply to us from Rome, or from Canterbury, or from Geneva; I should expect his response rather from the Thuringian forest—from the old German castle in which Martin Luther hurled his inkstand at the devil, because for many a year this gentleman has been throwing his tongue and his life at the same personage.

As he sails away, we shall find it very hard in this country to find any man who has maintained more steadfastly or more carefully the fundamental American principle of liberty. America means, if it means anything, fair play, free thought, free speech, free act with perfect regard to the equal rights of every other person; and yet unquestionably, while America stands for individual independence, American institutions continually tend to dwarf the individual by magnifying the majority, so that the minority, whether

it be one or many, finds it exceedingly difficult to keep upon its feet. It is so easy to drift with the current of your party and your sect, it is so easy to accept fashion in opinion as we do in dress, that presently conformity comes to be identified with good sense, with intelligence, with a just conservatism, and with respectability. In fact, I think we avenge our own cowardice by slandering the courage that rebukes us, and we accept the law which God has written upon the consciences of others as a rule of life for ourselves, against the law that He has written upon our own hearts.

Artemus Ward said that he was perfectly resigned to sending his wife's relatives to the war, and most of us if you observe it, are perfectly willing that our wife's relations should send us for instance, to church. Now the man among us who stands fast for the absolute liberty of the individual against his neighbor, if need be, against his country and against his race, the man who asserts the indomitable and indefeasible right of the individual, is first and foremost an American citizen. I know nothing finer in the life of the gentlest of men, Dr. Channing, than that in the case of a man whose opinions were doubtless absolutely repugnant to his own, a man whose methods of propagating his opinions doubtless shocked the refinement of Channing's feeling and the delicacy of his nature, he nevertheless placed all his fame, all his power, all the fineness of his genius, all his standing in society as a flame of fire to envelope and guard the independence of Abner Kneeland.

Now the man who, as a public teacher in this or any other community maintains this principle, who makes this the text, the theme, the gospel of glad tidings of his preaching, whose heart and mind lie hospitably always open to every cause, to every aspiration, to every human hope like the

golden tropic in which the sweetest fruits constantly spring, or the eastern caravansary that is open day and night to every wind of heaven, and over which the eternal stars shine he is an American benefactor; he is an American patriot. And this, ladies and gentlemen, as your hearts know, and as my tongue gladly and gratefully testifies—this is the praise of Octavius Frothingham.

You will not fear, I am sure, that I propose to go through the catalogue of his virtues, but I wish in one word more only to draw your attention to a cognate public service which he has rendered in this community. It is not that such teaching as his asserts the necessity and the duty of every man to form his own opinions for himself and courageously to abide by them, but it is that both his teaching and his life have shown us the vast superiority of character to creed. There is a very general disposition on the part of most people to be exceedingly troubled about the beliefs, and especially the theological religious beliefs, of other people, without observing the very important fact that in actual human conduct we pay very slight attention to the creed that a man tells us he holds.

I remember, that Dr. Channing, when he was a boy, went in Newport to hear—I don't know if it was Dr. Hopkins—(Mr. Higginson can tell you)—it was, perhaps, the successor of Dr. Hopkins. The entire congregation was duly sent to hell, and when the service was over, the little pale, shuddering boy, trotting along by the side of his father, saw his parents quietly sailing out of church and everybody asking everybody else about their health and wondering if the dinner was going to be well cooked. And the little boy, pale and breathless, his soul tossing with excitement, looked in his father's face and said, "But father, if we are all to go eter-

nally to hell, what difference does it make about the dinner?" And indeed if it be really a fact that the great mass of mankind are under sentence of roasting forever, what difference does it make whether the beef on Sunday is more or less roasted? If our good friends seriously suppose that it is of prime, of vital, of essential importance that we should believe this thing or that thing, why do they not show some higher sense of the importance of belief? If, at this moment, I were in danger of plunging head first from this platform, if any man was seen to be in peril of some great accident, if horses were running upon him, if some obstruction were put in the way of a train, there is not one of these gentlemen who is so concerned about the beliefs of others but would instantly hurry to save that fellow man from the merest temporary human calamity. If they really believed—in the sense that the words import—that their neighbor was in eternal peril, is it conceivable that they would have any heart, any hand except for his salvation? Does not this seem to show that this is an assertion of the lips rather than a vital belief?

If a man going down to Jericho falls among thieves, and is beaten and bruised, the Good Samaritan—(and our orthodox friends know it perfectly well)—the Good Samaritan is as likely as not to be a man with a very doubtful belief, or with no belief at all. If there be any great work of charity, of justice, of humanity, men of every faith, as of every age, of every temperament and of every complexion, join hand and heart and set the world a little forward.

Even so orthodox a clergyman as Whitfield, who was wiser than he knew, in the story that you remember so well—he began his sermon with raising his eyes to heaven, and calling upon Father Abraham: "Father Abraham, are there

any Protestants in Heaven?" "No." "Are there any Catholics in Heaven?" "No." "Any Presbyterians?" "No." "Any Baptists?" "No." And well might he have extended his inquiry, as Mr. de Normandie lately says—"Any Pagans?" "No." "Any Christians?" "No." "Well, Father Abraham, are you all alone in heaven?" And down came the response—the response written upon the human heart thousands of years before it was written in any book: "In every nation the man that fears God and works righteousness is accepted of Him."

And now, my friends, you take leave of a teacher who, almost unaided, has stood in a community practically alien for twenty years, and, unknown to the most of that community, has maintained its very corner stone and the foundations of its continued existence. You take leave of your teacher, and as he sails away I know that your hearts go out to him in the prayer of the child for his parent. "Oh, God, make the winds blow softly on him while he sails the sea."

We cannot be surprised, I think, that he goes. So much of all the sources and roots of our life are in Europe, that we turn to it, as Hawthorne said of England, as to our Old Home. Europe sits beyond the sea and sings to us like a siren. She woos and wins our friend not for the first time.

"He will see the glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome."

But, good American that he is, he will return from Egypt and the Orient, Samarcand and Kashgar, if so far he goes, from the Alps and Italy, all the better American, that he is rooted so strongly in what is best here and what is best there. He goes one citizen only of many millions, one teacher only of ten thousand. But,—I have said it a

hundred times behind his back, and with all my heart I say it now before his face and to your faces—he will leave behind him no citizen of a loftier life, no teacher of a more unquailing courage.

The Chairman. I think, ladies and gentlemen, we can now fully understand, if we have never understood before, why Mr. Mark Twain has made it a condition, when invited to speak, that he shall not immediately follow Mr. Curtis. He told me that his reputation was nearly ruined at a certain society dinner at which he spoke some two or three years ago on this account, and that his only salvation was in the fact that he was able to introduce some eighteen or nineteen different varieties of weather which Mr. Curtis knew nothing about. I confess it is somewhat unfair to call upon any individual after such a speech as this to which we have just listened. But I know there are gentlemen present who will graciously consent to bear witness to the truth which is in them. One of these I shall now have the pleasure of calling upon. He is a distinguished scholar, a profound thinker, who has created out of his own resources a vast society, which has perhaps, in its own quiet way, accomplished more good among the poor than any other in New York in the same period. I have the pleasure of introducing Prof. Felix Adler.

MR. ADLER said : Ladies and gentlemen, the difficulties of my position have already been described to you by the chairman. I should indeed feel quite at a loss how to engage your attention after the eloquent address you have just heard, did not my heart prompt me to speak a brief word at least to you this evening, the sincerity of which may atone for the feebleness of its expression. It is a sad

word which I have to say. It saddens me to think that Mr. FROTHINGHAM should go even for a short interval from amongst us. There is so much work to be done, he has wielded so broad an influence for goodness and for liberty in this community, which, Heaven knows, needs all such influence to counterbalance the opposing tendencies toward evil and bigotry, that no one who is truly interested in our cause can see him depart without feelings of anxiety and deep regret. If there were ten men ready to step into Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S place and carry on his work, we should none the less feel that there still remained a vacancy. But that there are not such ten men to be found—I mean such as are not tied down to their own tasks and could undertake an absent fellow-worker's duties—is even more deplorable. Nay, why do I say ten; there are not five, there are not three, there is not in this great country one who could do it. Our gathering this evening brings home to me more forcibly than ever a thought that has often weighed on my mind: Liberals must be more earnest in laboring to perpetuate their principles. If we believe that our convictions are sound and true and most precious, then we must see to it that they fail not for lack of devoted servants, of teachers, of preachers, of apostles. We must provide for a succession of liberal leaders, otherwise we shall have again and again to face the mortifying experience that the most promising free religious societies fall to pieces when the personal magnet is withdrawn that held them together. Now, why do I speak of this matter? To conjure up the spectre at the festival? No, but because I believe that Mr. FROTHINGHAM has recognized the same fatal deficiency in the liberal movement as carried on hitherto that I allude to, and because I fear that the thought of it may distress him now in the hour of

his departure. Yet he at least who, in his great modesty, is inclined to underrate his services, ought not to be allowed to dwell too much on what remains to be achieved. It is true, institutions count for much, very much, and no idea can permanently exist without them, but personality counts for even more. And Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S personality has been invaluable. The lofty character, against which suspicion has not even dared to breath its poisoned breath ; the exalted purity by which he has maintained the liberal movement, as far as his commanding influence reached, free from the stigma of moral baseness which its enemies would so gladly fix upon it ; the moral courage with which for the greater part of twenty years he fought single-handed the monster superstition, have not been vain, nor can they be forgotten. He has wrought more good than he knows of ; he has sown seeds whose bloom and fruition he could not see ; he has cheered numberless hearts in their struggles out of darkness ; he has made the way incomparably easier for those who came after him. No one is more profoundly sensible of this fact than I am, and it is both a duty and a pleasure to express on the part of many who agree with me the gratitude which we so truly feel. Theodore Parker, who knew from his own rich experience the difficulties of a liberal leader's position, defined the work of a liberal in the following way, showing what it is not, and what it is. He said : "The work of a liberal is not like gathering flowers in a summer meadow ; it is like diving deep into stormy water and bringing up with pain the pearl of the twisted shell." Mr. FROTHINGHAM, you have never shunned the danger of diving into stormy waters, but you have brought up many pearls also whose lustre will remain undimmed in your absence, and which will be treasured for lasting remembrance

in the hearts of the many friends that admire and love you.

The Chairman. And now I know I may be permitted to call upon the scholar, poet, preacher, essayist, the friend of humanity, the representative of liberal religion in our sister city, the Rev. Mr. Chadwick, of Brooklyn.

MR. CHADWICK then spoke as follows: Ladies and gentlemen, notwithstanding the very kindly manner in which I have been introduced to you by your chairman, I see "by the expression of your eye," if I may be allowed to use a somewhat hackneyed quotation, that you are well aware that the reason why I have been called upon to address you at this particular juncture is that you may have a rest between the honeyed sweetness of those speakers who have preceded me, and whose speaking is "as musical as Apollo's lute," and the honeyed sweetness of those who will come after me; for whether the Old Testament be authoritative upon all points or not, it is certainly very good authority upon this point—that it is not good for a man to eat too much honey. Darwin says, in his *Descent of Man*, that if all women were as beautiful as the Venus of Milo, or the Venus de Medici (I forget which he says; I hope he says the Venus of Milo, because I don't like the other one very well myself), that if all women were as beautiful as the Venus of Milo, men would long for a little change—any change would be a relief to us; and I am quite confident that after the addresses to which you have listened (and those that you will listen to will be of much the same sort), almost anything different will be a relief.

Now, can you imagine how the Brooklyn pier of the great suspension bridge would feel if it should wake up some fine morning and find that its companion and *vis à vis* across

the river was taking itself down and packing itself up preparatory to going off to Europe for a year or eighteen months? Now do not, my dear friends, I beg of you, imagine that I intend, by this perhaps unfortunate illustration, a villainous pun, and to suggest to you that I am in any way the "peer" of Mr. FROTHINGHAM. Certainly nothing of that sort. But just as, for the last fifteen years, I have been standing up in Brooklyn for rational religion as stiffly and straightly as I knew how, letting as much light go through me as was consistent with my general structure, and being much more particular to get a good hold on earth than to reach up very far into the clouds, it has been a great consolation and strength to me to know that Mr. FROTHINGHAM, over here in New York, was standing up in his own way as stiffly as a man could stand, going down a great deal deeper and reaching up a great deal higher than I ever could.

Those of you who have read Thackeray's *Philip*—and I suppose you have all done so—will remember that at one time when his dear Charlotte is riding along somewhere in France—from Boulogne to Paris, if I remember rightly—she hears Philip's boots kicking on the top of the diligence over her head, and her little sister, who is resting in her arms, starting from her sleep, she says, "Hush! hush! He's there, he's there;" as much as to say if he was there it must be all right of course; there couldn't anything very wrong happen to any one. And so again and again when the child that is within me—you know Plato's Socrates talks about the child within us that is afraid of death—sometimes when the child within me has been a little frightened perhaps, or when it has been rather dark and lonely, I have said to myself, "He's there; he's there, over across

the river. It is all right; don't be afraid; drive on."

But really, dear friends, I do want to give my personal thanks to Mr. FROTHINGHAM this evening for all the good that he has done me. It was about twenty years ago that a word of his first came to me. It was a sermon which he preached at an ordination in Philadelphia on "The Christian Consciousness." I didn't hear it—I read it—and I think perhaps it was just as well for me that I didn't hear it. Dr. Holland, in his *Kathrina*, speaking of his hero at some important juncture, says of him that "He felt the bud of being in him burst," and while I have never had a very distinct idea of what that meant—what sort of a sensation he experienced on that occasion—perhaps I should have experienced something of the same sensation if I had heard Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S sermon instead of merely reading it. I did read it; I read it over and over again, and it did my soul good; and I have kept it ever since and have it now, and from that day to this I have read every word that he has printed that I could get hold of, and I cannot begin to tell you what joy and strength and peace and help have come to me from his words from time to time. And when to the word I have been able to add the voice, which I did for the first time on the very day (I have often been glad to think of it)—on the very day that I left the quiet retreats at Cambridge to start out on my own life as a preacher, I heard his voice for the first time—and whenever I have been able to hear it since, you know how much it has added to the word to hear it spoken.

Then, too, I have a very special reason for being grateful to Mr. FROTHINGHAM,—because when he had been here in New York about two years—in 1861 I think it was—the people in Brooklyn of my society then being without a

minister, did their best to induce him to leave this little island of Manhattan and go over to the big one on the other side of the river. That would have been a very good thing for them, but it would have been a very unfortunate thing for me. I don't think I should ever have begun to be so happy as I have been if I had never gone to Brooklyn, although I should never have known, of course, what it was that made me so unhappy. Father Taylor, perhaps you may remember, said of Mr. Emerson that if he should go to hell he would change the temperature of the place and from thenceforth the emigration would set that way; and I have no doubt that if Mr. FROTHINGHAM had gone to Brooklyn, even if he had not changed the temperature of the place, the emigration would have set that way. But I think that Mr. FROTHINGHAM has changed the temperature of the whole land, and, paradoxical as it may seem, I think he has at the same time made it milder and more bracing than it was before.

When Theodore Parker was dying far away from home, in Italy, he said, "There are two Theodore Parkers now; one is dying here in Italy, but there is another living in America, who will continue to live and carry on my work." And now while Mr. FROTHINGHAM is going away from America for a little while—only for a little while—I am glad that there is going to be another O. B. Frothingham here in America who will live here and carry on his work. You have all of you read the story of "My Double, and how he undid me," but this double of Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S will not serve him any such shabby trick, because this double of Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S is his own self embodied in his printed words, which have gone east and west and north and south throughout this whole country, and often far be-

yond its shores. And I have sometimes thought that it is not you people of New York, who from Sunday to Sunday and from year to year have enjoyed hearing him so much, though I do not doubt in the least degree your enthusiasm or appreciation—I have sometimes thought that you were not the people to whom he had been most, and who would be the saddest if his voice should cease from its utterances for any great length of time. I think the people to whom he has been most are those little knots of people—sometimes only one man or woman here and there, far off from others in quiet lonely places. There these printed words of your minister have been nuclei for earnest men and women to gather round, and when they, afar off, hear that even for a little while his voice has ceased from its usual speaking, I know it will be a sad hour for them; only as in the old times the people on the outskirts of our American civilization didn't hear which president was elected until the next one had come in, so I trust that these people will not hear that Mr. FROTHINGHAM has gone away until he is fairly back again and lifting up his voice once more among you.

And I want to thank him here this evening, myself, as one of hundreds of young men whom I know, for I am glad to count myself among the young men—the rising generation,—I want to thank Mr. FROTHINGHAM for hundreds of people—(he will not believe it himself, but it is so)—who have read his sermons as they have gone forth in the land until they are dog-eared, until they are worn out.

“Servant of God, well done. Rest from thy loved employ.” I believe that comes out of a funeral hymn, but this is no funeral. I do not for one moment entertain the idea that Mr. FROTHINGHAM is going abroad for anything in this world,—some people seem to have got the absurd

idea in their heads (I don't see how it got there) that he was going for something else—I do not propose for one moment to entertain the idea that he is going abroad for anything but to have a good, long vacation, a vacation which he has grandly earned, a vacation which I am free to say he needs more than he would otherwise need, because he has been using up his other vacations for the last ten years working harder than he has worked the remainder of the time.

There was an old parson down at Marblehead who used to pray every Sunday for those who go down to the sea in ships, " May they be blessed with a perpetual calm." Now that isn't so absurd in these days of steam-vessels as it was in the old time of sailing vessels, but still I will not wish that for Mr. FROTHINGHAM; but I will wish that all winds may blow him fair, and that over on the other side he will find the best of friends, see all good sights and hear all pleasant sounds, and that he will store up all these things in his heart and bring them back to us in good season, coming back stronger in body and in mind. I am sure that nowhere can he go where he will find as good friends as he has found here among you, and that no moment of the time he is away will be so happy to him as that moment when again in Masonic Hall, or elsewhere, he shall stand before his own people and again lift up his voice to them, leading them in the way in which he has always led them, and shaming them in the way he has always shamed them by the beautiful ideals of social and individual life with which he has inspired your minds and comforted your hearts.

The Chairman. I now desire to introduce the noble actor upon the stage of progress, the man of advanced thought,

the especial defender and advocate of the claims of woman,
Col. Thomas W. Higginson.

Mr. HIGGINSON said: Mr. Chairman; these too flattering epithets which you graciously distribute among us like a good housekeeper making tea—one spoonful for each person and one for the teapot—make us all share something of Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S solicitudes this evening, if we cannot share his laurels.

We know for what we have come here—to do him honor. We all come joyfully—so joyfully that it is hard to restrain ourselves from saying a little too much, and I hardly think that any of us will properly supply that other side—that needful criticism, and point out the faults, which is doubtless important for the welfare of even his soul. Mrs. Julia Ward Howe used to say of the Boston Radical Club, that to read an essay there was like undergoing the ancient punishment of being smeared with honey, and then hung up to be stung to death by wasps. In this kindlier arrangement, our business is the honey, and as I understand that Mr. FROTHINGHAM is to have half an hour for himself when we have done with him, he must be his own wasp and do his own stinging.

I think that the appearance of this crowded room and this well-filled platform, are a sufficient refutation of that charge of exceeding solitariness which is the only serious imputation I have seen brought for a long time against our friend. I noticed it in the *Literary World* of last week, and a wholesome caution was implied, (which I think was scarcely necessary) to rising young clergymen, not to cultivate that quality to too great an extent in their own cases, lest they should lose their parishes. Solitariness has always

its fortunate limit, however, with radicals. The German Henry Heine said that there was never a German so crazy that he did not find some other German a little more crazy, to stand by him. I trust that that has been the experience of our friend. If he has had his little monomanias, he is not the only one, it is only they have not appeared quite so becomingly on the rest of us. He has experienced and always will, what Wendell Phillips once mentioned to me as the one compensation of a reformer for much that he lost—the warm, deep, immortal, personal friendship that the labors of reform create among those who have once entered on their stern career.

I am not, ladies and gentlemen, one of those fortunate youths who have appeared before us in succession, and have called our attention to the fact—without much consideration, perhaps, of the feelings of their elders—that they represent the rising generation, and that they in a manner look upon Mr. FROTHINGHAM as their spiritual father. I should be glad to be in the company of his children; but I must go back to earlier remembrances to-night, and say, what not many here perhaps could say, that I remember Mr. FROTHINGHAM in the days so far back in history that he was not even a radical. I remember him in his college days. I suppose I am the only person in this room except himself who read his autobiography in the class book at Harvard College, and I suppose I am the only person, not excepting himself, who has the slightest recollection of what there was in it. But I remember that in that autobiography there was not a line from which any one would have dreamed that a great reformatory leader was entering on his career. Not that it was conservative especially—it was not quite pronounced enough to be conservative; not

that it was timid—I don't believe he was timid in his cradle—but it was the position of a young man on the threshold of life, not yet awakened to its demands, doubting a little whether after all the world was not hollow, and his particular doll was not stuffed with sawdust. A great many such biographies have been written—we all write a great many more biographies at the age of eighteen, you know, than we ever have time for in later life—but it marked what to me has always been a distinguishing point in his career, the point which has constituted a large part of his peculiar usefulness and of his special relations, I do not doubt, to the minds of a great many here—the fact, namely, that he was not one of those who are born radicals, who, by their very nature, are iconoclasts, and in antagonism from early life to the position of those around them. He belongs to the class I might almost call higher—only that one does not wish to discriminate—the class of those who, without being born radical, have radicalism by a tyrannous conscience thrust upon them, and spend their lives in doing, not the work that their whole nature longs to do, but a work from which much in their temperament shrinks, and would gladly be excused. These men are radicals, not by reason of temperament, but because conscience comes into their lives and overrides their temperament,—crushes it, if need be, and says, "you must spend your life as a radical whether you wish to do it or not."

It is this peculiar quality of temperament that has differentiated Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S work from the work of many of us. It is because the things that came easy to many came hard to him; because many may have, as some one has said to-night, burned their ships behind them, but he loved his ships, and his heart clung to them as he saw them

burn. That is his peculiar power. It is the power of a man conservative in temperament but supremely radical in conscience ; the power that enables him to go to the refined and reach them, to touch the intellectual young man and say, "Sacrifice, if need be, the roses and the poetry, your tastes and your habits, and come and walk on my stern pathway with me." That peculiar power is what, when the lives of all the radicals of to-day are written, will be written against the name of OCTAVIUS FROTHINGHAM, and separate him from almost all other reformers I have ever known.

He gained a great deal by this. He gained safety from the vulgar and vague radicalism—the attitude that dear old Abby Folsom used to represent in the anti-slavery meetings when she said that all the world needed was to abolish all existing institutions and establish a series of free meetings. He gained the power of access to cultivated people as Napoleon's Monsieur de Narbonne gained it with the courts of Europe, because he also was in his manner a man of the old *régime*, and only in his convictions belonged to the new. Old Horace Walpole, who had a hearty dislike of the clergy, vouchsafed a word of praise to Launcelot Blackburn, Bishop of York. He admitted that there was a man with the manners of a gentleman, although he had been a pirate, and was a clergyman. In Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S case, I suppose, the good churchman would say that the clergyman came first and the pirate afterwards. No matter; he could not deny that the manners of a gentleman are here.

To reach the most cultivated classes a man must have known something of the surroundings they have ; he must be able to weigh the thoughts that have weight with them, and not merely socially, but intellectually to share

the life that he asks them to lead. This is what our friend has done; and there are multitudes in the country, there are many in this hall, I doubt not, who would say and say truly, that in this direction he has had for them a peculiar power, a hold upon their intellects, and their hearts such as is not precisely represented by Emerson, Parker or Garrison. Parker in his magnificent vigor, his "brave plebeian soul," as he wrote once in the description of Martin Luther that always seemed to me to describe himself, his vast, affluent, sometimes coarse strength, with, as he used to say of himself, seven generations of strong farmers behind him and he wielding the hoe and the spade for all—Parker had his peculiar power. If Mr. FROTHINGHAM lived a hundred years, and preached better every year, he never could preach in the way Theodore Parker did, or have the kind of hold that he had upon his audiences. But I do not see how any one can read Sunday by Sunday Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S sermons as they are reported, and then compare them with an equal number of Parker's sermons preached Sunday by Sunday, and not see that, however it may be with the affluent homely illustration, however it may be with the great warmth and great sympathy that touch thousands in Parker's presence—however it may be with them, yet for solid continuous thinking, you, of Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S congregation, have had Sunday after Sunday a quantity and a quality such as are not to be found in an equal number of sermons of the great Boston preacher. The difference is in temperament, quality, in peculiar power.

I do not doubt, as has been said, that there has been a steady growth of influence here. I rejoiced to see in London last year the same growth of influence in the congregation of

Moncure Conway, which is perhaps the congregation of the world that is least unlike this. I have noticed it year by year in visiting New York and in hearing reports from Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S meetings. It has sometimes been coupled with solicitude. I have heard it said sometimes that he was getting too popular. I heard an anxious lady say once that she noticed a steady improvement in the bonnets of the congregation as she came from year to year to New York. These things are perilous; but, after all, the world moves on, prejudices vanish, the most alarming doctrines we present do not seem so alarming as they did twenty years ago. Lady Adelaide Lindsay, who was famous for being less good looking than any English woman of her time, (and that at that period was a strong expression), said in later life when somebody thought she was looking a little better, Yes, she believed the bloom of her ugliness was rather passing by. I think it is true of all religious radicals and women's rights' reformers, and all the rest of them, that the bloom of their ugliness is passing. We are getting a little nearer into respectable society, and perhaps the influence will go on so during our friend's absence, that when he comes back he will hardly recognize us. But in the meantime the work he has done goes with him, and its influence here will go on.

Something was said about the possibility that if his name should get into an encyclopædia he would appear as a very dangerous being. We cannot count much on that, the danger there is all the other way. The time may come, if he lives and does well, when we shall have to prove for him, as we have had to prove in Boston lately, in regard to Dr. Channing, that he was not actually an evangelical believer, but had some spots of liberalism in him after

all. So the time will come when you will have to convince your children that Mr. FROTHINGHAM did not altogether stand for the conservative theology of his day. If you doubt it, look at the great *Biographic Générale* of Paris—the great biographical dictionary of the world. Of course, it does not leave out Theodore Parker's name, it gives twenty lines to something called Theodore Parker. And in these twenty lines the *Biographie Générale* records for the benefit of all coming time that Theodore Parker was a great preacher, who devoted himself to vindicating the infallibility of the scriptures and the divinity of our Lord! Who knows that our friend, with all his well meant efforts, will be any more accurately reported than that?

Friends, let me say this one thing in closing: What he has done for you and for me and for all of us is not so much that he has brought us any truth, or even any system of truth, as that his whole life and teaching have been a hand-pointing us where to seek truth for ourselves. Without this he might have been a founder of a sect, and you might all have been under the painful necessity of labelling yourselves "Frothinghamians." With this, he has risen above sects and helped us to rise above them; he has told us that the word is very nigh to us—in our mouth and in our heart—if we would only seek it.

I remember hearing once of a sea captain who lost his reckoning in crossing the Atlantic, and drifted far south—farther and farther. He did not know where he was for days; he was short of food, short of water. At last, after many days, a vessel came in sight. He signalled; the signals were answered. He could not quite make out the answer; he was not near enough. He signalled again, "Water!"

give us water!" Again came an answering signal. He could not make it out. The vessel came nearer and nearer, got within hailing distance; he could signal with his voice at last, "Water! give us water!" There came a motion of the hands that at first he could not understand, and presently there came back the answering hail, "Dip it up; dip it up. You are in the Amazon."

We are all floating in the ocean of truth—an ocean of fresh, sweet water. He who helps us is not the man who ladles it out to us glass by glass, but the man who tells us to seek it for ourselves and we shall find it.

The Chairman. I know of nothing so sad as to undertake a task which we are unable to perform. I have been trying to induce one of our own to make some remarks—one whom we honor, one of whom we are proud, one who unites the culture of the scholar with the sweet grace of the poet, and the successful man of affairs. I have been vainly striving to get Mr. Stedman to say something. Will you help me?

MR. STEDMAN then spoke as follows: I should have shrunk from a duty and have lost a pleasure if I were not able to add my voice to that of the better men who have spoken to you to-night in testimony of their debt of gratitude to Mr. FROTHINGHAM.

In listening to Mr. Curtis, and hearing his delicately veiled doubt of the belief of many of the orthodox classes in their own expressions, the thought came to my mind that he received a different bringing up from my own. In fact, the early age at which he found himself at Brook Farm shows that this must have been the case. I was trained in the family of a Puritan of the strictest sort. We were al-

lowed to read no books on Sunday except the Bible, Sunday-school books, and two works which did much mischief unawares—Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Those were supposed to be sound, and, indeed, their theology is sufficiently dismal.

But the mental stimulus they afforded served to cultivate the imagination, and did not prevent me from thinking for myself. In our region people seriously believed in condemnation after death, and went around with gloomy faces in that faith. This I never could understand; my whole nature was antagonistic to such creeds. It was my instinct to believe in what was beautiful, and I could see nothing beautiful in the Deity that we were instructed to adore. But I led a busy life, and wandered around, and was scarcely aware that any one in this great city believed as I did. I felt almost like a heathen in this town, and rarely went to church at all. One day I picked up a mutilated heading of one of Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S sermons, and found that here was a man who taught liberty of thought, who at least gave me the liberty to think as I chose.

Now, I have seen in newspapers lately—among others in a very respectable newspaper over the Hudson river, in Newark—the statement that Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S mission here has been, to a certain extent, a failure; that he has founded no sect—a point upon which Mr. Higginson has so admirably touched—that he has made few followers, and that he has given up his work in despair. If Mr. FROTHINGHAM had done nothing by his teaching here for the last twenty years, except to grow as he has grown, to teach himself as he has, to rise where he is now, he would have done a great work; but in looking at this audience,—seeing the faces before me, realizing what these people have listened

to, observing the quality of the friends Mr. FROTHINGHAM leaves behind him, I feel that his work here has not been lost. The cause of free thought in this city is in just the same condition, to borrow a current metaphor, with the cause of specie payment and the condition of business prosperity six months ago in this country. Financial strength was here, had been here for years, and we knew it not. I believe that we are just on the edge of a general establishment of religious freedom, and that the people of this city will be more indebted for it to Mr. FROTHINGHAM than to any other man.

Mr. Higginson said something in relation to the exceptional position of Mr. FROTHINGHAM, as a man who was conservative by nature, but radical through conviction. I thought that was the keenest, the most delicate, the best point made to-night. Many have done wisely, but thou excellest them all.

Mr. Kinney told me that he once said to Mr. Greeley, "Do you know what Charles King's opinion of you is —what he considers your chief characteristic?" Mr. Greeley said: "Well, I don't know. What does Charles say?" "He says Mr. Greeley, that your chief characteristic is hatred of a gentleman." Mr. Greeley scratched his head and said: "Well, Charles is about right. Gentlemen are generally oppressors of the poor, and I guess I do hate them." Now that is not the kind of gentlemen that we have in mind. It is true that Mr. FROTHINGHAM is a man who, by early training, and by descent loves a church, loves a cowl; he likes that which is old and venerable and beautiful, that which is built by the hands of artistic and cultured men, and over which time has run its ivy. Such is his nature. But he is radical by conviction, and he says that the

truest and most lasting beauty, the beauty of the future, is that which must be founded on truth. And he has been able to lead many to share this conviction with him, among whom I count myself one of the humblest.

We sit here by the gates of the ocean ; we are constantly called upon to salute those who pass beyond. Mr. FROTHINGHAM has trained our heads, and he also has touched our hearts. To-night it is a question not merely of culture or conviction, but one of feeling. We love our pastor. We are glad he is going to have a rest. We know that he won't stay long ; that he can't stay long ; that in a very short time the old impulse will come over him ; he will smell the battle afar off, and cry, "Aha ! aha !" and will be back among us refreshed and eager for a continuance of his work.

The Chairman. Having succeeded, with your kindly aid, ladies and gentlemen, in drawing out our own poet, let me now hope for a brief speech from that friend of humanity, that noble younger brother of the revered poet of Cambridge—himself a poet and a preacher—the Rev. Samuel Longfellow.

MR. LONGFELLOW thereupon came forward, and spoke as follows : I see it in your eyes, friends, that when the chairman began yet again his string of ingeniously varied complimentary epithets, you did not guess, until he mentioned the name, that I was the one to be called upon to address you. I am disposed to make my speech in the language of that "double" of the story to which Mr. Chadwick alluded, who was instructed to say, whenever called upon to speak at a public meeting, "Mr. Chairman, so much has already been said, and on the whole so well said, that I will not detain you by adding anything more ;" and as long

as he kept his head he continued to make that speech, and then sat down. I shall not detain you much longer.

I should like in the fitting time and place and presence to speak also those praises of Mr. FROTHINGHAM, which I could so heartily and sincerely speak, but it seems to me that if he did not need to go to Europe for rest yesterday he must need it to-night.

I have not learned the art which seems to have been suggested to the previous speakers by the locality—that art of the stage “aside”—wherein remarks made by the voice perfectly audible to all before the speaker, are supposed to be inaudible to the hero on the stage. Pardon me, then, if I simply add that when I met Mr. FROTHINGHAM in the ante-room I heartily congratulated him that he was going to have a good vacation—a real period of rest. For no man has better earned it than he, after twenty years of continued and uninterrupted labor, and with such a prodigious power of work as he has. New York will not seem the same place to many of us when he is away. Those of us who have not been in the habit of seeing him often have always been glad to know that he was here, standing up for freedom and truth. We shall be glad when he stands here again on the same errand.

But what are *you* going to do now in these two years? What *can* you do but try to live up to what for twenty years Mr. FROTHINGHAM has been preaching to you? Perhaps it will take you all of the two years to do that thoroughly; to live out that religion which he has from Sunday to Sunday presented to you, and which you have, I believe, so heartily, so appreciatingly received; a religion free alike from superstition and from irreverence; a religion at one with liberty, at one with nature, at one with science,

at one with good morals, at one with reason, at one with all the higher and best feelings of the human heart.

The Chairman. We must have a few words now, I think, from the scion of a good old anti-slavery stock, the Rev. Joseph May, of Philadelphia.

Mr. MAY spoke as follows: Mr. Chairman, I was hoping, when you began to speak of your inability to carry out your programme, that there was coming a relief for some of us "young fellows" who are down towards the end of it.

I have, however, learned one lesson, as I have sat here this evening, which I ought to be glad to communicate, if only for its possible bearing upon that question of the currency of the country, which has occupied so much of the popular attention. It is, sir, that those paper "notes," which have been spoken of, become rapidly depreciated, their value diminishing in exact proportion to the number of speakers who have preceded one—so that the sooner we pay our debts, Mr. Chairman, the better; which I take to be good radical, as well as good Unitarian doctrine, both here and elsewhere. Mr. Curtis, with the art of a practiced speaker, seized at once upon an illustration which was burning in the pockets of us all, in regard to Mr. FROTHINGHAM'S (good man that he is!) "going to Paris;" and from him down to the last speaker something has been stripped from the memoranda which I laboriously prepared this afternoon, until my actual speech is perforce wholly extemporaneous; it has that merit, at least.

It would hardly be kind for me to add anything more to the heap of laurels under which Mr. FROTHINGHAM must already feel himself to be struggling. I should hardly be fitted or able to do it. The only office which I can dis-

charge on this occasion is to utter a kind expression of sympathy with you, and of regard for your pastor, in behalf of a body which I may assume to represent, and with which you must be, as well as Mr. FROTHINGHAM, at least on that conservative side of him which has been spoken of, in some degree of sympathy. I mean that Unitarian body from whom it has been a grief to many of us that your pastor should have felt it incumbent on him, in the form of his public position, to separate himself. That the principles on which Mr. FROTHINGHAM has based his ministry among you are those on which the Unitarian body is founded has certainly been indicated to-night in the references which have been made to the character and principles of its great leader, Dr. Channing. And if it be that these principles, operating upon the minds of some of your pastor's brother students of truth in the Unitarian denomination, have brought them to different positions from his in opinion, I am sure I can say from the body of them that they have had nothing but regret for the outward division, while there has been an impossibility of separating them in the spirit. I am sure I may say to-night that this is the first occasion on which the Unitarian clergy or laity will have been glad to have Mr. FROTHINGHAM go away from them. Possibly that which has been to-night noted as true of the progress of the age, of the progress of thought, will persuade Mr. FROTHINGHAM during his sojourn in Europe that we who still stick to the Unitarian name in a more or less loose and easy fashion, are, after all, pretty well along to where he has been; and since it is but a difference of opinion which has differentiated his position from ours, I earnestly trust that when he comes back to America he may find it possible to come back also to the Unitarian fold, bringing you with

him. So many of us have been, for many a year, halting about our "position," and troubled what to call it, I have come to the conclusion that the Unitarian body has such indefinite limits that it can easily include whosoever chooses to stay in it. As Mr. FROTHINGHAM sets sail in pursuit of rest and pleasure, the most cordial congratulations on his past services, and best wishes for his future health and work will go with him from us Unitarians all.

If I may be more particular, Mr. Chairman, I represent here the oldest Unitarian Church, organized as such, in America. Its only minister before myself was, through his long pastorate, more than suspected of radical proclivities, and in its congregation I feel sure (and it does not trouble me) that your pastor has, besides personal friends, many intellectual sympathizers. For all these I will add a cordial word of congratulation to Mr. FROTHINGHAM at this impressive time. I think also I may venture to say that I speak for a great community. The peculiar doctrine of Quakerism was that of the inner light. Was not this almost identical with that which has been the most characteristic doctrine of our radical school—the doctrine of the imminence of God in the soul of man? Among the million inhabitants of Philadelphia there must, then, be very many whose conscious or unconscious sympathy should be uttered here to-night. For them, for the Unitarian body, for my own congregation, for my beloved predecessor in the ministry and for myself, I offer Mr. FROTHINGHAM the heartiest congratulations and the kindliest good-bye.

The Chairman. I have a number of letters from distinguished persons who have desired to be present, but who have been compelled to express their regards and regrets in

writing. [The chairman then read the following letters from Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles G. Ames, William Lloyd Garrison, Oliver Wendell Holmes and George Ripley. Owing to the lateness of the hour, the other letters received, and which are printed beneath, were not read.]

LETTERS.

CONCORD, MASS., April 16th.

DEAR SIR :

I have received your letter arriving this morning and not the foregoing one of which it speaks. I grieve not to obey your kind invitation. I am not in condition to make visits or take any part in conversation. Old age has rushed on me in the last year and tied my tongue and hid my memory, and thus made it a duty to stay at home. I regret it the more that MR. FROTHINGHAM has strong claims on me, not only on his own, but on his father's side, who was a noble friend to my youth. I rejoice that after so long and faithful labors in the church, he has still well-earned rest and enjoyment before him. With great regret that I must send no better reply.

R. WALDO EMERSON.

J. H. MORSE, Esq.

BOSTON, April 19, 1879.

DEAR MR. MORSE :

For the official invitation extended to me to be present at the Social Reception to be given in honor of MR. FROTHINGHAM on the evening of the 22d inst., I return my thanks, with an expression of sincere regret that I am obliged to forego the pleasure which the occasion cannot fail to furnish all who may be in attendance.

MR. FROTHINGHAM has distinguished himself not only for his literary ability and scholarly attainments, but conspicuously as an

independent outspoken thinker in the arena of theological investigation, and a courageous expounder of religious and ethical doctrines, at the cost of being proscribed as a heretic ; neither recklessly nor egotistically antagonizing the popular sentiment of the day, but uttering his deepest convictions as to where the line runs between reason and superstition, simple truth and dogmatic assumption, genuine inspiration and apocryphal resemblance. His printed discourses indicate the pains-taking student, the philosophic investigator, the fearless non-conformist, the broadly Catholic teacher ; and, however widely dissenting from some of the views they inculcate, every candid mind must admit the felicity of their diction, and the many admirable thoughts and sentiments contained in them.

MR. FROTHINGHAM has been versatile, abundant and long continued in his ministrations ; and the consequence is impaired health, which imperatively demands relaxation, and which it is to be hoped will be fully restored by the transatlantic tour he has in contemplation. The best wishes of a troop of friends will attend him.

Yours cordially,

WM. LLOYD GARRISON.

J. H. MORSE, Esq.

661 FIFTH AVENUE, April 21, 1879.

MR. J. H. MORSE, *Chairman.*

MY DEAR SIR :

I greatly regret to find that I shall be prevented by the state of my health from attending the reception to MR. FROTHINGHAM this evening. But I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without expressing my respect and admiration for the pastor, and my cordial interest in the occasion which is intended to do honor to his character and services.

The work of MR. FROTHINGHAM has been in accordance with the spirit of the age, and has been called forth by one of its special

demands. Within the last half century, and more notably within the last twenty-five years, the progress of liberal inquiry and scientific research has weakened, if not destroyed in many minds, the basis for a life of ideal aims and disinterested purposes. The reign of speculative dogma, though it has not entirely passed away, has been greatly impaired and thus the pillars of our existing civilization have been rudely shaken.

The poets of the age have stood in the gap. Tennyson, Mrs. Browning, Bryant, Longfellow, Emerson, Lowell, our beloved Bayard Taylor—(I can speak of him under no other name), have done much to hold up the standard of an ideal life in pure and beautiful colors. Many a youthful spirit has been quickened to a high consecration by the song of the poets, and been inspired with 'devotion to "whatsoever things are lovely, and true, and of good report." I have never heard that a young man has been led to forget the dreams of his youth by the study of these writings ; I have never known that any man has been made a worse husband or father, or less valuable member of society by their influence over his mind ; on the contrary, the respectable sinners who have made such havoc with the faith of the public, and the property of the widows and fatherless, have been generally men who were the enemies of the noblest ideas, and were always ready to denounce Emerson as an infidel, Longfellow as a Sadducee, and Frothingham as a subtle conspirator against the traditions of ages.

Now, the work of our friend has been in the same line of direction with the poets and men of genius who have shed a healing light over the darksome path of so many struggling souls, announcing a faith in the spirit where faith in the dogma had died a natural death, and gathering around him a band of pure-minded and devoted men and women, who, if they have not clung to the lights of the ancient world, have been made by his teachings more loyal to the belief in humanity, to spiritual ideas, to the faith that

works by love, to the charity that never fails, to the hope that flourishes in immortal youth.

This has been the mission of the beloved pastor in sympathy with whom so many tried and trusted friends are here to-night, and how he has performed that mission your own hearts will testify better than my inadequate words. I need not in your presence refer to the signal ability, the richness of resource, the manly freedom, the persuasive eloquence, the earnestness, and propriety and delicacy, and power with which he has performed the duties of his high office, and made full proof of his ministry. Your best wishes that his future may be like his past cannot exceed the ardor and sincerity of my own.

I remain ever faithfully yours,

GEORGE RIPLEY.

BOSTON, April 2, 1879.

MY DEAR SIR :

I honor Mr. FROTHINGHAM for his courage and long devotion to the cause which you fitly call "the Religion of Humanity." I wish I could be at the meeting when his friends are to bid him farewell for the present, in the hope of seeing him after the rest he has so well earned, as many months or years younger in health and strength as he will be older by the calendar.

But my duties command my presence in Boston at the time you mention, and I shall have to deny myself the pleasure of taking part in the interchanges of kind feeling and listening to the eloquent friends who will render any speech of mine unnecessary, and will lose nothing by my absence but a devout listener.

Believe me dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

O. W. HOLMES.

To the Hon. FRANK FULLER,

Office of *The Christian Register.*
BOSTON, March 29, 1879.

DEAR MR. PUTNAM :

It is ever so good in your committee, or yourself, to beckon me to Mr. FROTHINGHAM's hail and farewell meeting, and I shall certainly come—only all the time this muddy vesture of decay must stay here ! If I were able to make my voice heard above the happy hum which I trust will resound in the Union League Theatre, there would be one more hearty word of personal regard for the going minister, one hearty prayer for his coming again with power and glory, and one cordial salute to all in every place who toil for the supremacy of The True, the Beautiful and the Good.

In all cases yours,

CHAS. G. AMES.

To G. H. PUTNAM, Esq.

NORTH ANDOVER, MASS., April 11, 1879.

GENTLEMEN :

I thank you for inviting me to attend the social reception in honor of my friend MR. FROTHINGHAM. I shall be unable to do so, otherwise than in the hearty expression by letter of my sympathies with the occasion and my best wishes for him and for you.

It is eminently fitting to bear witness to the uninterrupted devotion of his rare powers for twenty-five years in the service of that Universal Religion, into whose larger liberty and light we believe all past faiths and holy names must fade. Constantly spending his best thought and faith, battling in the open breach; and in punctual performance almost unaided save by your upholding sympathy, he has earned what will go with him as a benediction, the gratitude of thousands, whose minds he has stirred into new birth, to whose spiritual nature he has disclosed paths of becoming culture, and whose hearts he has widened into the open communion of nature, science and humanity.

As one whose friendship with your minister dates from the beginning of labors in which we have together seen such changes in the public mind as few equal periods of time have effected, allow me to enter my praise of the moral loyalty and intellectual aspiration which you desire to honor. They have not deepened through the tests of his ministry so much as proved that they did not need to do so; and they have maintained their first simplicity through all the noble resources which he has gathered into their service, and the wide fields of reform in which he has shown himself a master. His catholicity towards the thought of other times and other men, his constructive treatment of past history and present struggles, are justifying the claim of our "Radicalism" to renew the life of man from the roots upwards, by the attractions of a nobler springtime in the sky.

Let me say that although some depressing circumstances must attend this severance from a sphere so long identified with his best life, yet this is surely an occasion to justify the grand rule of the Stoic, "All things are fruit to me, O Nature! which thy seasons bring." The coming opportunities are as great as the past and as bravely earned. And we shall look with confidence to greet our friend, returning full freighted with fresh stores, that he will know well how to turn into harvests for all.

Very truly yours,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

To J. H. MORSE and others,
Committee.

50 West 47th Street, April 18, 1879.

MY DEAR MR. MORSE:

I am sorry to find, as I told you I more than half expected, that my business engagements will prevent my attending your social festival next week in honor of Mr. FROTHINGHAM, and must therefore with regret decline the invitation you were so kind as to send me. But I shall take another opportunity to say

Good-bye to Mr. FROTHINGHAM, and I beg you to accept my best wishes for the success of the occasion.

Most truly yours,

JOSEPH H. CHOATE.

J. H. MORSE, Esq.

NEW BEDFORD, MASS., May 5, 1879.

MR. J. H. MORSE :

DEAR SIR.—

In behalf of the Committee of Arrangements for the social reception given to MR. FROTHINGHAM, you ask me to write out for your pamphlet report of the proceedings on that occasion, the substance of what I might have said there, had time permitted the carrying out of the complete programme of addresses. I am very willing to do this so far as I am now able to recall what was in my mind to say, for I have no prepared notes to help my memory. But my chief point was to speak of MR. FROTHINGHAM's services in connection with the Free Religious Association and movement ; and I am grateful for the opportunity to put on record the testimony I might have borne to the high value of his labors in this direction—the more grateful since it so happened that none of the speakers specially alluded to this part of his work.

I could and did most heartily endorse all that was said in the spoken addresses, of the rare power of MR. FROTHINGHAM's ministry, both by voice and pen, in behalf of liberal, national and humane religion ; and I might have added some words to express my own personal indebtedness to him, in ways that he knows nothing of, for what he has said and done in his career as preacher. To say, as some of the newspaper critics are saying, that such a ministry is a failure because he leaves no church behind him and no voice during his absence is to be heard in his place, evinces but a shallow knowledge of the methods and extent of the influence which goes out from such a life-work.

But it was as fellow-officers of the Free Religious Association that MR. FROTHINGHAM and myself were brought most intimately together. For eleven consecutive years we stood in that organization side by side, he as President and I as Secretary ; and hence no other person, perhaps, is better qualified than myself to testify to his fidelity and devotion to that movement. During all these years, in our official and in our personal relationship, both in matters of counsel and in affairs of administration, there has been unbroken harmony between us. The Free Religious Association was first suggested in a circle of younger men ; but he was among the earliest to give a cordial reception to the idea. It was my lot first to carry the suggestion to him and to talk with him over the inchoate hopes and plans. He entered at once into hearty sympathy with the movement ; saw, as we all did, the difficulties to be surmounted, but justly appreciated also the need and the opportunity ; and from that time he became one of the foremost in the preliminary consultations and arrangements. When it was determined to commit the movement to a public meeting, and he consented to serve as chairman of the first public committee, and then as President of the Association, we felt that with his abilities and reputation thus placed at the head, the standing and success of the new organization were in a great measure already assured.

His faithfulness in serving the Association as its President from the time of that first public meeting in 1867 until he felt constrained last year to resign the post, is now largely a matter of public record. But it may be well to remember some of the details here. His firmness, grace and tact as a presiding officer were remarkable and gave a special character to our conventions. During the term of his presidency he attended and presided at every annual meeting of the Association in Boston, and also at all the conventions (excepting one) held by the Association in the autumn or early winter in other parts of the country. In some years two or three of these conventions have been held in distant cities,

involving a good deal of fatigue by travel and speaking, and some experiences not a little distasteful to his temperament. But, though he sometimes doubted whether these conventions did enough good to pay for all they cost, when the time came for another he was ready for the self-sacrifice and the labor. In these conventions he always spoke at length at the opening session, unfolding the principles and aims of the Free Religious movement. His briefer introductory addresses at the annual meetings, couched in his vigorous and elegant diction, and his graceful remarks introducing the speakers and closing the sessions, are preserved in the printed Annual Reports of the Association and are among the gems of free religious literature. One of these opening addresses, that for 1870, is more elaborate than usual, and may be here referred to as perhaps the most complete statement of his idea of Free Religion which MR. FROTHINGHAM has anywhere put into print. For a number of years, too, he opened regularly on the first Sunday of January a series of lectures given under the auspices of the Association in Boston, and on those occasions first presented to the public some of his finest contributions to religious thought and discussion.

For more than half of the time, therefore, that MR. FROTHINGHAM has been your minister in New York, he has stood before the country as the chief executive officer of the national Free Religious Association and the most conspicuous exponent of its ideas and spirit. That the members of that Association have been proud of their President and are very grateful to him, seems a small thing to say in view of such services as he has rendered. I know that very many of them believe that such success as the Association has had in winning public attention and respect, has been largely owing to his eloquent and cultured advocacy. By his spoken and printed word he has addressed a great multitude of people throughout the country, who now join their eager desires to yours of his society in New York, that he may be speedily re-

cruited by this season of rest, and to come back again to be your minister and theirs.

Most sincerely yours,

Wm. J. POTTER.

The Chairman. The lateness of the hour admonishes me that I must call upon the last speaker of the evening. Silence will be golden after the silver speech of our honored friend and pastor the Rev. O. B. FROTHINGHAM.

Mr. FROTHINGHAM on coming forward was greeted with enthusiastic and long continued applause, the gentlemen on the platform and the whole audience rising.

MR. FROTHINGHAM then spoke as follows: Can anybody tell me who I am? If I believed, or could believe half what my kind friends here have in all sincerity and heartiness been saying, I should incur the displeasure of the great apostle who said, "If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." Fortunately, during a serious and thoughtful life I have practised severely the art of self scrutiny, and humbly think I know myself better than even these very noble and sympathetic friends who judge me after all from the outside, and I assure you, dear friends, that I am morally safe against the kindest things that can be said of me or to me. Who can look back on a ministry of twenty years, and not see many things that he would wish to change, spots he would be glad to erase; deficiencies he would be thankful to repair, blunders he would wish to correct? It is a long story of back-sliding, timidity, imperfection of purpose, substitution of impulse for judgment; a long story with which I will not burden you or sadden myself. Others may know what

he has tried to do; what he has left undone or tried to accomplish, he alone can tell, and he tells it to nobody.

With my audience and with myself, I have simply tried to be honest. If I had been endowed with the graceful persuasiveness of my friend Curtis, or the heroic courage of my friend Higginson, or the sweet reasonableness of my friend Potter, or the steadfastness and clearness of my friend Adler, or the joyousness of heart of my friend Chadwick, I should have done better,—so much better;—so much better! But I was only myself, had only my own temperament, my own circumstance, my own small modicum of ability; and if the weapon I was forced to use sometimes bent and broke in my hand, wounding me more than my opponent, perhaps the fault is not wholly chargeable to myself. Mine has been a career of conflict, where hard words had to be heard and spoken, and heavy blows dealt as well as received; and if sometimes there was a stronger smell of sulphur in the air than of the fragrance of roses, it was not as I would have had it.

Let me not however, dwell on this. I do not suppose that all these dear and noble friends have come together to pay tribute to me, or to what I have done, for that is nothing; but there are certain things which are worthy of any tribute—of the best tribute of the best people, achievements with which I have been fortunately associated, and to which is due any reputation that may cling to me. How much has been gained in the twenty years of my ministry in New York,—how much of value so inestimable that it can never be spoken; how much of liberty in the privilege of fine speech, fine thought, fine action! The change in public sentiment has been great in all the centres of influence. In the small places outside the great cities—perhaps there is

not so much of this peculiar quality manifest; but in the powerful centres of mind, liberty of thinking on the subjects of religion is now effectually guaranteed. A man may go to whatever church he pleases, or to none at all; may recite what creed he approves, or none whatever; if he is an earnest, honest, sincere man (and he should not be respected if he is less than this), he is honored, whatever his ecclesiastical connection, whatever his dogmatical system. This is an enormous gain. There are men—some of the best men that it is my privilege to know—who never darkened the doors of a church, who cannot intelligibly tell what they believe, who never make a confession of faith even to their own hearts, who never put up official prayer. Yet they are looked upon with something like veneration for the manhood that they reveal. We have gained so much as this;—that religion now, in the centres of life, means character, conduct, principle, earnestness, sincerity of purpose, vital reality of thought and sentiment.

It is little that any individual has done toward this—little that any party or sect may have done; the age has accomplished it. It is the spirit of our time to be undogmatic. It is not American only; it is English, it is German, it is French, Italian, Spanish. The gospel of freedom has its representative men, and its resounding voices in every civilized land to-day. The individual reformer is a result—an effect quite as much as a cause; a creator of his period. We are still pausing at the threshold of the spring praying the genial season would come. It will come, necessarily, with the penetrating sunbeam. Give us the sunbeam for a few days and all is green again; the air is soft, the trees laugh with their leaves, the birds recover the tunefulness of their voices, and all the world is glad. When the sunbeam

comes! But the sunbeam comes as the effect of the revolution of the planet, it is a result quite as much as it is a cause. As my sweet souled friend Longfellow has so well voiced it, in the hymn that we have loved to sing in our halls:

Out of the dark the circling sphere
Is rounding onward to the light.
We see not yet the full day here,
But we do see the paling night;

And Hope that lights her fadeless fires,
And Faith that shines a heavenly will,
And Love that courage re-inspires,
These stars have been above us still.

This confidence in inevitable truth is a great gain.

There is another gain incidental to this which only the workers in this great and noble cause are fully conscious of. It is that we have reached a point now of intellectual composure, of mental calm and justice, of spiritual equilibrium. The age of polemics, the bitter age of controversy is passing by. We do not now assail beliefs; we interpret them, we do not abhor, we understand them; we classify instead of refuting; we place doctrines where they belong, enabling them to report themselves. We do not call ourselves the enemy of any dogmatical system, but the truest friends, rather, because we believe that we have attained a point from which we may interpret every system from the inside, and thus do it absolute justice. One of the most sturdy combatants of the old orthodox system now living and writing is John Morley of London. What is his method? He flings down the gauntlet before orthodox theology, with a determination that makes it ring throughout Christendom. What does he in substance say? Not 'I hate, I detest, I oppose, I will pull down;' but rather, 'Gentlemen, we challenge you to a race for the prize of life;—not to a conflict, not to a strug-

gle of arms, but to a noble emulation of ideas. Let us see which will do the most for humanity. Here are the vexatious problems that try all our souls, the problem of wealth and poverty, the problem of labor and capital, the problem of law and liberty, the problem of communism, of socialism, these problems are before us all; let us see who offers the best solution. I say science, philosophy, reason; I say art, literature, general progress of mankind; *you* say theology. Let us try. We shall distance you; we shall not assail you, we shall classify you, and only so condemn you; we shall leave you behind, and we shall do it because we shall achieve a work which it is not in you to perform.' This is the spirit in which modern faith comes forward to meet the faith of other days, not with slogan and war cry, not with the flourish of weapons, but with the still small voice of reason. In the noble spirit of emulation, it calls upon men to do something, to show them what they can accomplish, proving their faith by their works. This is a great thing. The radical now is calm, self-possessed, rational, he has no disposition to go backward; he is not becoming reactionary, he is not lapsing into an unthinking conservatism. He has no more respect for the old systems than he had before, but he does not caricature or misrepresent them, he treats them with intelligence; he is able to do them ample justice. He says to the Roman Catholic, to the Buddhist, to the Brahmin, to any one else, 'I understand you, your history is before me, your thought is manifest. Come forward, I take you by the hand. You are a servant of the same humanity of which I am a servant. Let us see how, with our separate methods, we can work together to do the one work which no single one of us can do alone.'

This spirit of humanity—this is the last great gain which,

it seems to me, has come to us with liberty. The vital thing with every church is to do something good for the world—to address itself hopefully to vital problems. The Society for Ethical Culture in New York establishes and conducts a Kindergarten for poor children, institutes a workingman's lyceum, and offers lectures weekly during the winter by able men, who speak to the working people directly, as man speaks to man. That is the way we begin; that is the way that every living society endeavors to justify itself in this generation. All churches now are coming to be churches of humanity; every society now is a society of humanity; the evangelicals are now coming forward to show what they can do to make the world better; and the charm of it is that orthodox men, distinguished for learning, ability, grace and authority, are adopting scientific methods, are controlling the practical wisdom of men of the world to know what is the best way of dealing with the money question, the pauper question, the communist question, the social question in all its forms; they are adopting that method that works, in place of the method of tradition. This is the hopeful side of the situation, that in spite of themselves the spirit of the age, the spirit of liberty, of reason, of humanity is possessing churches—not ours only—not the liberal churches alone, but the Catholic, the Protestant, the Evangelical—we are all beginning to work together. A fine spirit of love, a noble soul of justice, a spirit of brotherhood is catching from soul to soul, jumping over the differences of faith and sect, and touching with light all earnest spirits, let them call themselves by whatever name they may.

This is the sign of the new dispensation. I see it. I am grateful to acknowledge it. Little as I may have done to bring it in, it is the vision of its coming that has kept me

at work so long, and will keep me at work as long as I live. For it is not in the nature of things that a man with a living heart in his bosom, or a living conscience, or a soul susceptible of being kindled by great ideas and sublime purposes—I say it is not in the nature of things that a man thus looking toward the future can travel away with flying colors and spend idle years in Europe. It is America that calls for us all, and it is America that shall have the last drop that warms my heart.

Dear friends, good friends, some of you old friends tried in fires of adversity, some of you new friends, who would be true if the hour of adversity called upon you, all friends to-night in a common sympathy and a common purpose, I should be more than insensible if I could help being deeply touched by this reception. If in these twenty years I have done anything to lighten any burden, to smooth any path, to comfort any spirit, no one should be so grateful for that as I. But if any of you think I have done anything so good as this, remember it is not I that have done it, but those solemn, eternal forces that work upon us, around us and through us, which have condescended to use me as their instrument.

T W E N T Y Y E A R S

O F A N

I N D E P E N D E N T M I N I S T R Y



P R A Y E R.

INFINITE Spirit, for whom we have no name, of whom we have no adequate thought, and whose light plays all around us, and whose perpetual witness is in every man's heart, the strength of all righteous purpose, the light of all our seeing, the power of all our hope, we bow our heart before thee, we open our hearts to thee, we ask for thy light in our mind, for thy strength in our spirit. As we stand on the brink of the flood of years and look backward, may our memories be pure and noble and sweet, memories of hours of peaceful meditation and lofty strenuous thought, hours of release from the care and trouble of the world, hours sometimes of answer to life's painful questions, hours of silence from passion and unrest and tribulation, hours of peace and hope and solace amid the world's struggle and defeat, hours when we have dreamed of a better life, of a world above this world, of a spirit within us stronger than temptation, stronger than error, stronger than evil.

As we look back, may all memory of bitterness disappear, and may we believe more and more in the work of that great spirit of truth that guides men through their groping and stumbling and falling to a brighter light than they have dreamed of. And, as we look forward into the darkness of the unknown future, may we turn our faces thither-

ward with confidence and hope, knowing that that living power which has carried us along so far will carry us even to the end, with the same kindness and the same invincible love. In this hour we would remind ourselves once more of the deathless faith that we have tried to make clear, and to cherish faith in a living spirit that is not outside of the world, a creator, a judge,—but that is inside of the world and working in all its properties and operations, thinking in its thought, glowing in its beauty, pulsing in its nobler conscience and animating all that furthers the progress of mankind.

Once more, we would take to heart the deep and earnest faith that the spirit that revives, refreshes and regenerates the world, is at all times in the world, and that it has its representatives in every conscience, in every true heart, in every living and faithful soul. We would once more renew our faith in the better powers of humanity that are within us all, powers that seek the light in the midst of superstition, credulity, error and darkness, that strive after the good amid all the bewilderments and conflicts of evil. Living as we do in a world of doubt and error and strife, where there are so many questions that cannot be answered, so many problems that cannot be solved, so much mystery that no knowledge or thought of ours can clear away, we would press to our hearts these deathless convictions. If we are old men and old women, we would look back and feel that a power greater than ours has been ordering our life for us. If we are young, with all life before us, its issues still open, its opportunities still unspent, we would look forward bravely and cheerfully, knowing that the Providence that worketh all things uses us as instruments; and, if we are strenuous workers in the world, immersed in its

business, tried with its cares, perplexed by its doubts, we would still believe that there is always victory for true men, for true women ; that nothing good comes to an untimely end ; and although the saintly ones seem to go out in darkness, yet their light burns and blazes forever. We would think of the poor, the helpless, the forlorn, the forsaken, the wandering, the distressed and the distracted. Are we not all children of the mysterious Power that governs and blesses the world ? May we live in faith, in trust, in obedience, till the time comes when our song of aspiration shall cease, and we shall swell the chorus of the perfect praise and love !



TWENTY YEARS
OF AN
INDEPENDENT MINISTRY.

AT the close of a term of a ministry of many years, it is appropriate that something should be said in regard to the principles on which that ministry has been conducted, the aims it has had before it, the purposes it has cherished and the ends it has sought to further. Twenty years ago this very month this society was established as a Unitarian society. The minister, however, belonged then, as he had belonged for many years before, to the more liberal branch of the Unitarian body. He had been and was a believer in the spiritual philosophy—was what was in New England called a Transcendentalist. He was of the school of Theodore Parker. He represented, therefore, the movement of the party, not its stationariness—its future, not its past. He believed in its best ideas; he cherished its most enthusiastic hope; and he had faith in a future that was enfolded in its germs but was not unfolded in its actual condition. He had always found fault with the theology of Unitarianism as being fluctuating, uncertain and vague. He had never rested in its final articles, had never supposed it possessed any final articles, had never presumed that it had uttered its word, but had always taken for granted that it was trying to utter its word; that it was clearing its mind and seeking for some distinct articulation that it had never

found. Its theology seemed to him defective—fatally defective—and weak at almost every point. There was no article of it that was not in his view, and had not in his view long been subject to fatal criticism. That criticism he had made no secret of entertaining and applying. He was known as one of those who repudiated the spirit of sectarianism and who built simply upon ideas, who had faith in knowledge, in free thinking, and all of whose hope in modern Christianity consisted in largeness, loftiness and breadth of view. Thus he found fault with the Unitarian doctrine in respect to the unity of God. The Unitarians had discarded the doctrine of trinity, not always, as it seemed, and still seems, with absolute and entire wisdom ; but it had never arrived at a clear, compact, reasonable statement of any doctrine of divine unity. That God was numerically one and not numerically three, it had asserted until it was out of breath ; but that God was one, that there was but one spirit ruling, pervading and regenerating the world—a spirit of art, of beauty, of intelligence, of heroic will, of aspiration, of progress, had never been apprehended—but one spirit, omniscient, omnipotent, ever-present. Because Unitarianism had a faint fear or suspicion of the existence, somewhere, of a devil, who shared and divided the empire of the world and somehow cut across the divine purposes and baulked the supreme plans—a spirit of pure evil, a spirit of error, a spirit of iniquity, that was forever interposing doubt and fear and obstruction in the irresistible path of progress, which had been feeling its way through ages and was destined in future to come out into perfect light. The Unitarianism of a generation ago never voiced itself clearly on this great article of the unity of God. We do not comprehend it now. Science is throwing light upon it ;

philosophy is helping us to interpret it ; the advance of the human mind is unfolding it, and we see its separate bearings. But it is only through imagination ; it is only through faith and hope that we can really rest in a doctrine the deepest, the highest, the noblest, the sweetest that ever enchanted or ever will enchant with its seraphic music the souls of the bravest thinkers and the most heroic workers of the race.

Again, the Unitarian doctrine of the Christ seems entirely insufficient. That he was not God was asserted clearly enough ; that he was something less than deity was declared, —an archangel perhaps—the creator of the visible world—possibly a spiritual being of rank higher or lower ; and some very audacious minds dared to say that he was a man !—but that was said with bated breath and always carefully distinguished by those who said it, in the emphatic declaration that, when they said he was a man, they did not say that he was a mere man, that is to say, that he was a man in any intelligible, rational, or complete sense at all, that he was human. His humanity was put at such a distance from ordinary humanity—from the highest humanity—the humanity of Plato, the humanity of Confucius, Buddha, or Socrates—and the highest peaks of humanity seemed so much like hills in his presence, that it was about as sensible to call him God at once and leave him there in his solitary heavens. For if the Christ be human, he is human according to our conception ;—not the perfect man, for that we cannot conceive of,—not the ideal man, for that we only think of in our dreams ;—not the possibility of man, for that is what the holiest souls hunger and thirst after in their hours of light and meditation and sweetness. When we say Christ is a man, we mean that he stands in the line of history, that

he has a past, that he comes out of the bosom of his race, that the experiences of humanity were his; that he knew what it was to doubt; that he knew what it was to fall into error and mistake; aye, that he could be touched with moral imperfection; that his soul did not always rest in perfect serenity on the bosom of the great Father. This is involved in the idea that the Christ was human. But Unitarianism never said that, had not the courage to say it, did not see its way far enough to say it; and, therefore it left its doctrine of the Christ floating in the air midway between heaven and earth. They called him Saviour, Redeemer, Intercessor, a Being somewhere above humanity, somewhere below deity.

The doctrine of human nature also was equally unsatisfactory; almost unnecessary pains were taken to say that man was not depraved, I say almost unnecessary, because it seems to me difficult to believe that any human being in his senses can believe so suicidal a doctrine as the total depravity of human nature. This doctrine was discredited, but the substantial healthiness of manhood and womanhood was not so clearly affirmed. Disparaging phrases were used in regard to mankind, the performances of mankind, and the experiences. A tone of complaint and penitence, sometimes almost of unseemly whining, was indulged in when speaking of the achievements of mankind. The business of the world was spoken of as if it was only half worthy. It was perpetually intimated that men could do nothing of the magnificent type without some supernatural help from beings who were outside of their common destiny. All this was rather discouraging; at all events it was very perplexing and confusing, but it was incidental.

It was the faith of the minister of this new congregation

that this vagueness would be put aside, would be outgrown, that the intellectual life of the denomination would clear itself as it went on, and that, by and by, a definite and coherent statement would be made in regard to all matters that concerned the religious life. Therefore, in perfect faith, in entire sincerity, without a surmise or a suspicion, he stood as a Unitarian, and his congregation was a Unitarian congregation.

But there came a time, and an evil time as it seemed to him then, and as it seems to him now, when Unitarianism determined to organize itself where it was—that is to say, to lay by the idea of an indefinite and expansive broad future, and close up its ranks and see what it could do as a sect among sects. In this attempt, though generously meant, inaugurated by the bravest and amplest minds, it was necessary that there should be an intellectual basis of creed—a theological basis—for no other was at that time possible—and statements were made which seemed to commit the denomination to certain tenets. From that point the duty of your minister seemed to be clear. It was to hold on in his own way, to work out his own thoughts, to separate himself from the denomination with which he had acted, and to stand alone. For the last ten years and more, this ministry has been a purely independent ministry, connected with no sect, associated with no denomination, but simply conditioned on the fidelity to the principles of free speech and free thought in all questions that concern religion.

The position of individualism came easy and natural to a man who had been an adherent of the spiritual philosophy, who was by profession of faith a Transcendentalist, who stood with Parker and with Emerson on grounds of pure

reason such as faith lends itself to. Individualism, in fact, is hardly consistent with anything else than individualism, for the holder of this faith believes that light comes to the individual mind, truth to the individual heart, rectitude to the individual conscience, and that it is through simplicity and sincerity, an utter devotion of life, that each single soul arrives at the glory of his own development.

Emerson preached individualism. So did Parker. So did all the men of that school. It was the logical outcome of their faith; the faith was very nearly associated with the Quaker doctrine of the inner life. It differed from that doctrine simply in this respect, that the Quaker doctrine rested on a basis of theological orthodoxy, while this rested on a basis of philosophical research. But that essential faith was faith in the individual soul, faith in reason, faith in the inspiration of the private heart. Institutions were disparaged. Systems of faith were set aside. Special dogmas were discarded. The spirit of dogmatism was made the subject of the most earnest protest. It was a very noble position—the noblest position that can be held; and, so long as it could be held simply and sincerely and reasonably, with due loftiness of purpose, with humility and modesty and consecration, it was safe. It was a good principle. It was the only principle on which nobleness could proceed, and nothing but nobleness ever proceeded from it. Did anything but the supremest kind of nobleness ever come from Ralph Waldo Emerson? Did anything but nobleness of the most heroic kind, tender and sweet, ever come from Theodore Parker? No, nobody could say that it ever did. Was it not a Baptist preacher of Boston—a preacher of orthodoxy of a very intense evangelical sort to sailors, who, being asked one day

what would happen to Ralph Waldo Emerson in the future —was it not this man who said, "Well, I will not undertake to say. My creed forbids that he should go to heaven. Everything forbids that he should go to hell. For if he went there, there would be no more hell: he would change the climate and emigration would set that way." So long as this spiritual philosophy could maintain its purity and sweetness and nobleness, individualism was safe—perfectly safe. Nothing but gentleness and sweetness and right could ever proceed from it.

But the time comes when this noble position is held by fewer and fewer persons, when individualism becomes rough and rude and contumacious, when vagaries and whims and notions calling themselves inspired and a coarse kind of self-assertion take possession of the holy place, and utter their diatribe in the name of prophecy. Then individualism becomes questionable. Then a destructive process begins. Then institutions are assailed in an intemperate spirit. Then the great creeds of the world are assailed by vulgar hands, are pulled down in promiscuous ruins never to be built up again.

Therefore, dear friends, it is given me this morning to say this, that in my judgment the era of dogmatic individualism is drawing near its close. The time will soon come, in my belief, when dependence will be placed not upon the individual speaker or the private teachings of one man, but when men and women will come together and consult for mutual advantage, when there will be a desire for an affiliation, a longing to organize, when another and nobler belief in institutions will be established, and new modes of faith will be sought and will be followed. It seems to me that we are on the eve now of organization, of construction on a

new basis, under the guidance and direction and impulse of a new principle. It seems to me that the era of destruction is ended, and that all noble and intelligent minds who believe in society, and hope for the welfare of society in the future, will help in this work of reconstruction.

Now, where are we to look for the force that will reconstruct? There is the Roman Catholic church—for Europe and England and America the greatest church that there is. When we think of the Roman Catholic church we think of the middle ages. We think of the violence, darkness, credulity, superstition, spiritual tyranny of a crushing sort. But the middle ages are passed, never to return. We live in the nineteenth century, in the midst of light and liberty, of a free press, free institutions, free speech, free thought, all the world conspiring to know more about the universe and about society. It is simply impossible that the Roman Catholic church—even if it should attain the ascendancy that in my judgment it dreams of with futility—would ever be what it was three hundred years ago. The men who administer its affairs are men of the nineteenth century. They read, they think, they have regard for the institutions and the civilization of the world they live in. Their church must have caught it, have been affected by it.

The church is making immense conquests in England and in America. I do not fear them. I have no apprehensions. I am willing it should make them—all the conquests it lawfully can. Though I disbelieve in its speculative foundations through and through, though the principles upon which it is built are to me little short of detestable, still I can see the prevalence of that stir without a shudder, and I believe that the old fashion piety of the modern age—the passive piety, the piety of affliction will find refuge in that

old church. The spirit of babyhood that is in the larger part of mankind and womankind, the spirit that cries in the night, that gropes around for a friend, that trembles and shivers, that lacks self-reliance, that lacks courage and hopefulness, the unintelligent spirit, the ignorant, cringing spirit, the spirit that skulks through the world as the scout goes through a hostile camp—this spirit which prevades mankind now to a very large extent will find refuge in that old church. Why? First, because it is an institution older than anything in the modern world—centuries old—a thousand years old—an institution covering leagues and leagues of territory, including people of all nationalities, of all tongues, compact, organized perfectly well and understanding itself, going by its own mechanism, going without being pushed. It never answers questions. It never opens questions. Its problems are all closed; it stands and works and has a tremendous momentum of its own. It has its head, its officers, its priests, its altars, its sacraments, its temples, its rules. It is a form of social life. It is an organized charity. It has an organized business. It is an organized home. It is in fact, a form of civilization. That is a great thing. When a man joins the Roman Catholic church, he feels that he becomes a member of an enormous brotherhood. Calm, passive, unresisting, untroubled, it holds on its unswerving way, sees some go, sees others come, is never weary, is never flustered, understands itself, comprehends its position, does its work, and leaves undone the work that it does not feel called to do. This is the force of an institution. It is a prodigious force. There are worlds of people who cry out for authority, who want rest, who clamor for peace, who have a deep hunger in their souls for quiet—"No more tormenting questions. I cannot understand the world." No-

body understands the world. The old church has a declaration as good as any. Let us lean up against that ancient wall and feel that we are supported." This is the feeling that in the modern world and in modern parts of the modern world draws scores, hundreds, thousands of people toward that ancient establishment.

Again, it is an immense advantage that the Roman Catholic church has, that its creed is under ground. It is not thrust into people's faces all the time. They are not even required to believe it or to know what it is. We build our houses on solid foundations, but we do not feel the necessity every day, of going down cellar and employing masons to test the walls to see whether every stone is in its place. We live in the parlors, in the chambers. Our windows look out above ground, and we are satisfied with the foundations as long as the superstructure stands. So the Roman Catholic does not live among speculative questions, is not forever pulling up his harvests to see how they are growing. He takes it for granted that certain things are settled, that certain questions are answered, that certain problems are disposed of; and when people come into his church, they do not have to be catechised in regard to the shadows of meaning of each article and every single point of the creed. It is sufficient that they accept it, that they come in and use the establishment and enjoy it and get what they can out of it. That is an immense gain, because the number of people is very small who can intelligently raise questions. It requires almost as much mental ability to ask a question as it does to answer it. The Roman Catholic church has these questions answered and done with. You can belong to the church and go in and out of the doors and parlors and not know on what principle the superstructure was erected.

And again, this ancient church has in modern society an immense advantage here, that it can use all kinds of people, can turn all men and all women to some sort of account—can set them all at work—the idle, the ignorant, the stupid, the finical, the enthusiastic, the visionary—there is something for them all to do. They are happy, contented and harmless. The innovator, instead of going off and establishing a different sect, is taken in and set to work and grinds the will of the universal church. So we see people who have nothing to do in the world, who are sure if they try to do anything, to do it wrong—we see those people going into the old church, quietly taken up, put in a very little niche and made busy and contented and pleased with themselves, and they do no harm.

No other church in modern society has these immense advantages. Protestantism has them not. Protestantism is at best a bundle of complicated sects. It is simply a conglomeration of various interpretations of scripture. It is nothing more than a misrepresented bible. Protestantism is only three hundred years old. It is a schism, a departure from the old church, and it owes the savor of its piety, its nobleness, its grandeur, its sincerity to the ages that lay behind it in the old church from which it came. Protestantism, in my poor judgment, has two fatal weaknesses—all protestantism, every form of protestantism—from that of Calvin to that of Channing and Buckminster. It builds on the bible. Its foundations are a book. It constructs all its ideas upon a more or less shadowy theory of an inspired letter—a book that for the last hundred years has been opened to the assaults of learning, knowledge, criticism and scholarship, which have riddled it through and through so completely that we are not sure of the genuineness of a sin-

gle chapter of it. Its doctrines, its ethics, its religious ideas have all been called in question, and have been called in question not by idle gossips, not by foolish sentimentalists, not by ignorant vagabonds struggling over the fields of literature, but by the most earnest, thoroughly trained, conscientious, sincere and learned minds that have ever lived on the planet. The questions they have raised cannot be answered. The doubts they have started never can be put to rest. They have, in fact, undermined the very foundations of the protestant system, and protestantism is not wise enough to keep the book underground as the catholic church does, but brings it forward, puts it in our faces, challenges our criticism, and claims or pretends to assert that doubt has never touched it, that the questions are perfectly idle and futile, and not an iota of its authority has ever been started. That seems to me a fatal objection. Protestantism has committed itself to the book and with the book it must fall sooner or later,—later, of course, because it will take generations yet for these doubts to have filtered down through all the levels of intelligence until it gets among the common people, but the end is certain.

Another fatal weakness of protestantism is that it is neither of the old nor of the new. The past and future struggle in its bosom, as they have struggled from the beginning. It gave out that it had faith in reason, in free thought, but it stopped. It never practised reason; it never believed in free thought. It has set up an iron-bound creed, and it has denounced science and philosophy and learning just as vigorously and absolutely as if it had stated all these things and knew what they meant. Tradition and truth, authority and liberty, law and progress, the reign of the idea and the reign of the creed have lain side by side unrecon-

ciled in its mind. These two powers are tearing protestantism to pieces. They are always struggling together visibly every Sunday. In orthodox pulpits the science, the philosophy, the progress, the intelligence of the day must be called in question. These open problems are discussed before all the world. An uneasiness, a settled feeling of trouble is at the heart of the old system. It is not at rest. It is not composed.

Therefore I say the refuge of old-fashioned piety will be in the old church rather than in the new, in Romanism rather than in Protestantism. Mark you, I say the *old-fashioned* piety—I do not say the new piety—I say the passive piety, the piety of childhood, the piety of the wan, wasted, weary and troubled heart.

But what of the new piety? What of the new reverence, the new hope, the new faith? The modern spirit that looks forward, that believes in progress, that has faith in man, that builds on ideas—what of this? Where is this going? Not to Rome, not to Luther, not to Calvin, not to Buckminster or Channing, not to any protestant sect, not to any Christian denomination. It has another future. It must have another formation. What shall it be? There are and will be more and more people who are unchurched, who are unbelieving, who wander about vaguely hither and thither, to whom religion is an unmeaning phrase suggestive of superstition and of absolute credulities, who detest the priests, who will not listen to the preacher, who will not open the book. These, I say, will multiply more and more and we may expect in the coming generation to see a great exodus from all the churches of people who are practically “comeouters” not by philosophy, not by thought, not by knowledge or conviction, but simply because the instinct to wan-

der is stronger than the instinct that keeps them at home. They are spiritual "tramps," and though a "tramp" may start out with the best of purposes and with manly courage and determination to do some work wherever he can find it, it will not be long before he becomes a vagabond and a beggar clothed in rags, his shoes worn out and all nobility extracted from his soul. This it seems to me to be the danger of the general dispersion that is taking place now among those who have come to disbelieve in the old theology.

It seems to me that what we need now is organization, a new basis upon which we can ground our superstructure, new principles upon which we can coalesce. I will not say a creed, because there is no creed at present, but I will say something like a denomination, with certain pretty well understood articles upon which earnest, faithful, intelligent people can agree, can coöperate.

The new church we see the beginnings of in the new societies east and west, in the determination that they, one and all, show to do something for humanity. The new Unitarianism of the east and of the west is becoming less and less dogmatic and more and more human. The societies are associations of charity; they are organs of good will; they study social science; they are engaging in live things. The Society of Ethical Culture in this city supports a kindergarten for poor children, free to all who shall come, a workingmen's lyceum, where the working people will be instructed, if they wish to be, in the best knowledge that pertains to their condition. Orthodox churches are catching the same idea and working it out. One and all they are conspiring as a society of beneficence. I have been in parlors where were met together representatives of different faiths, orthodox and unorthodox, for the purpose of con-

sidering the wants of the poor in New York and out of it. I have sat in company with the rector of Grace Church on one side and the minister of the Society for Ethical Culture on the other, and all of us, apparently, without the least suspicion that we were disbelievers and foes on Sunday, putting our little wisdom together to see what we could do for working men, for the landless, the unemployed, the waifs, the astrays of modern society. This is an omen; this is an indication; this shows how, one and all, people are looking not towards creed but towards deed, how a human spirit is coming to pervade even Christendom.

But all this is provisional and tentative. This is in the way of experiment merely. We must have intelligent organization, some speculative basis, some ground upon which we can stand, some open pathway along which we can walk, some well understood conclusions which shall hold us all together. I am not prepared to say what this shall be. I do not know myself what they can be; but I do know this, I have read enough and pondered enough upon this to know that science—social science, social philosophy are at work, busily harmonizing things, learning what they are, what can be done, how it should be done; and I believe that the time is not far distant when those who are ready to work for humanity can work together, not as a scattered body, but as a close, compact phalanx.

To-day, as it seems to me, the last word of dogmatic individualism is spoken from this place. When we come together again, it will be with a resolution and determination and purpose to organize, to close up ranks, and to present a firm, persistent front towards all demoralizing errors and false vagaries that are tearing the modern world to pieces. Every year, as I grow older, a new sense comes to me of

the responsibility that is upon every man and woman to do something, however little, in any way that is possible for him to do—something to rectify what is going wrong, to make straight what is crooked, to sweeten what is bitter in our social condition.

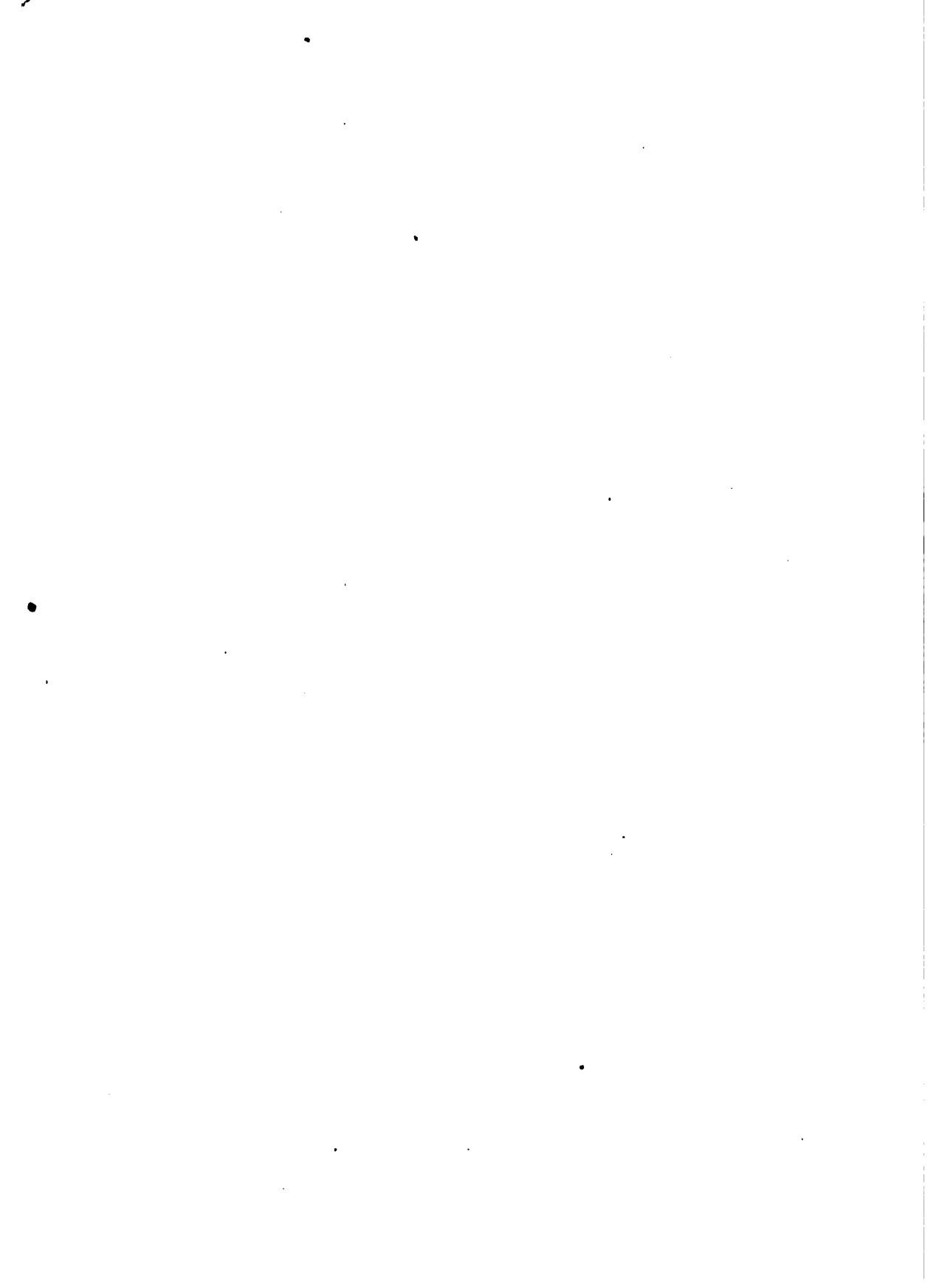
We are in an age of transition, in a world of open questions, of unsolved problems, where doubts and fears, questionings and cross-questionings flit to and fro in the air, where multitudes wander bewildered and perplexed. I am not conceited enough to think that I can set anything right that is wrong, that I can answer any questions or throw any light upon any unsolved problems; but this I feel sure of, that nobody who means to do something, who is simply sincere and earnest, can fail to make a positive contribution towards the future.

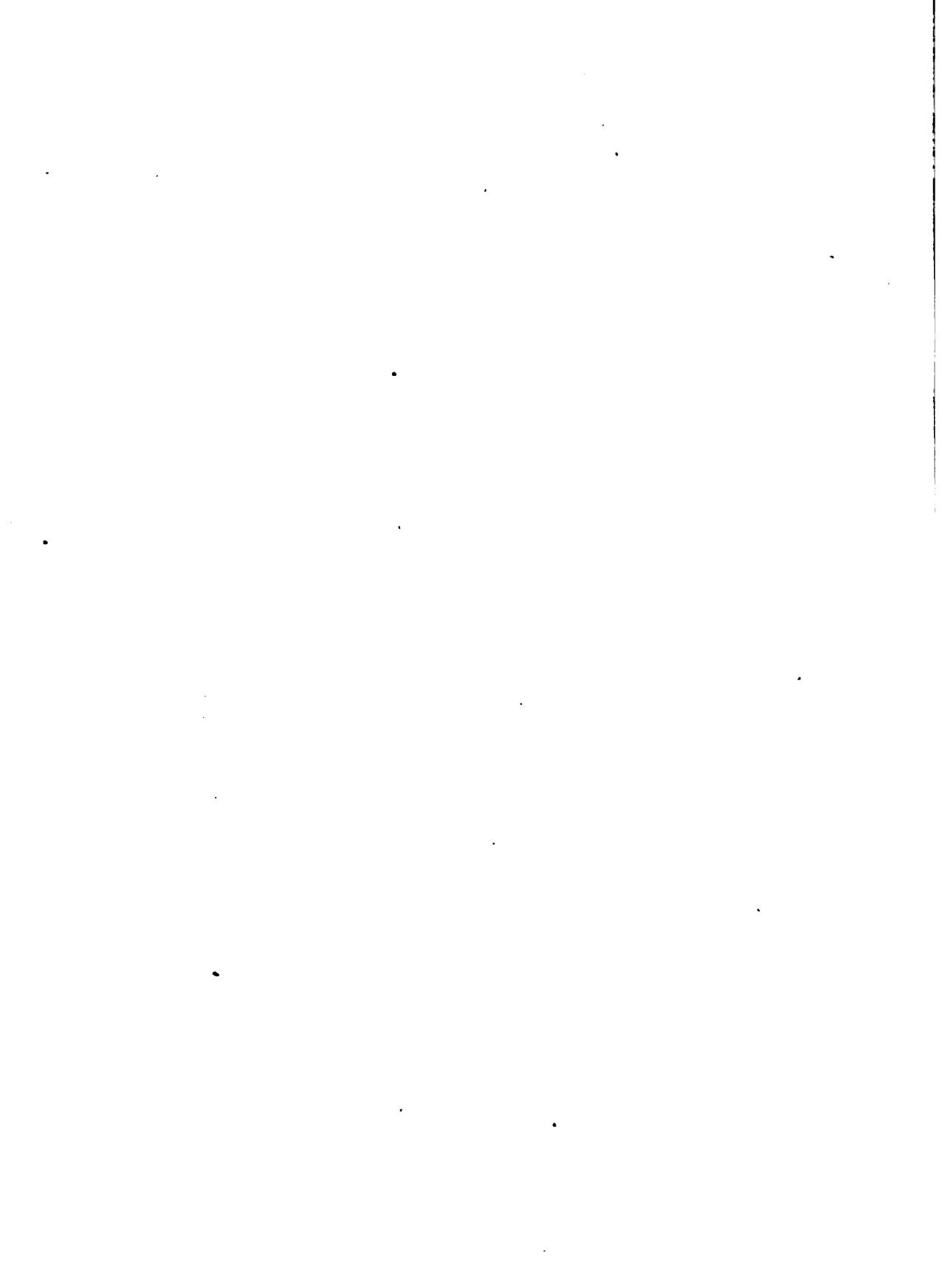
And now let me say that I leave this work for a time in your hands. For twenty years I have done what I could with such moderate gifts as I possessed, with such earnestness as was vouchsafed to me, to throw a gleam of light here and there upon dark places, to make things that seemed to me crooked a little straighter, and things that seemed to me wrong a little righter, to hold up hope and support courage as well as I could, being but one. Some of you have listened to what I have had to say through all these years. You know what it is; you know what I have meant; you know what I have purposed. I leave it with you while I am gone and can speak to you no word. I shall believe this, that all those who have given me credit for honesty of purpose, for intelligence, for earnestness, will do what they can to justify themselves in their own way, not in mine. I do not tell them what they ought to do or what I wish them to do. But whether they go to church or not, however they use

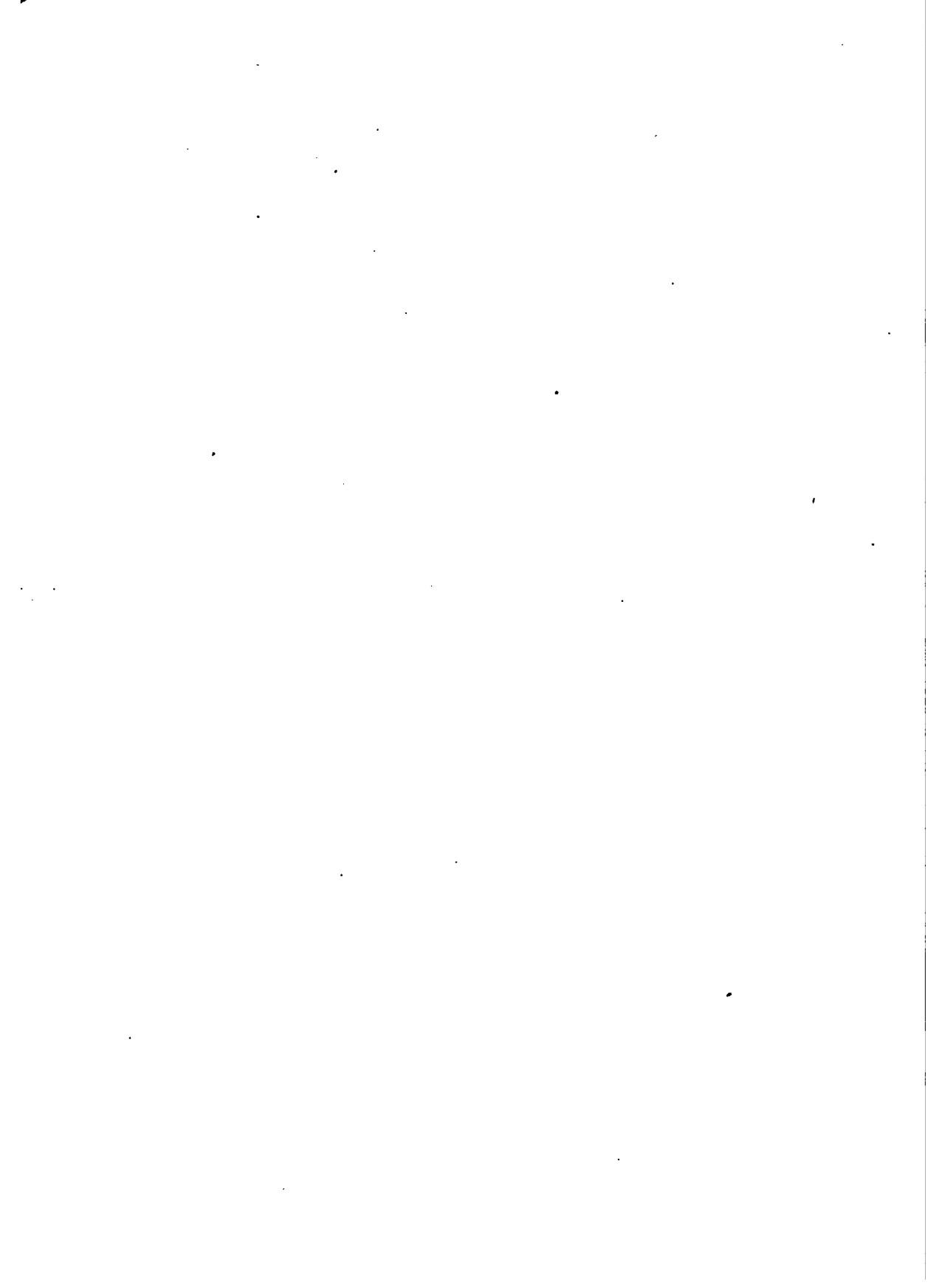
their time on Sunday, let me believe that there is not a man or a woman who has listened to me with any confidence or with any trust, who will waste, squander the precious hours of the Sunday, that dear legacy which has been left to us from the bygone years, and which the world sorely needs to have employed. Employ it as you will, but do not give those grand hours to idleness, to sleep or to vacancy. Let them not run to waste, but let them drop their golden contributions into the treasury of the world's intelligence with hope and love.

In the meantime, let us never have hours of despondency or hopelessness. Let us be ashamed of ourselves if we ever feel like doubting that the future years will be better than these last twenty years have been ; for the powers that work for the regeneration of men are immense in their scope and in their potency.

The press, the literature, the art, the free intelligence and untrammelled integrity of our modern society cannot fail to pulverize with their invisible tread all obstacles, stone and brazen, which lie in the path of human progress. The laws of the intellectual world may be taken for granted. The voice of the individual speaker may cease, may be silenced forever, but the eternal word will always be articulate.







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PROCEEDINGS AT A RECEPTION

IN HONOR OF THE

REV. O. B. FROTHINGHAM

GIVEN BY THE

INDEPENDENT LIBERAL CHURCH

AT THE UNION LEAGUE THEATRE

TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 22, 1879

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DELIVERED BY HIM AT MASONIC TEMPLE

APRIL 27, 1879

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